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The Beaver

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Canada's Black Defenders

Farmer McIntosh's Remarkable Apple

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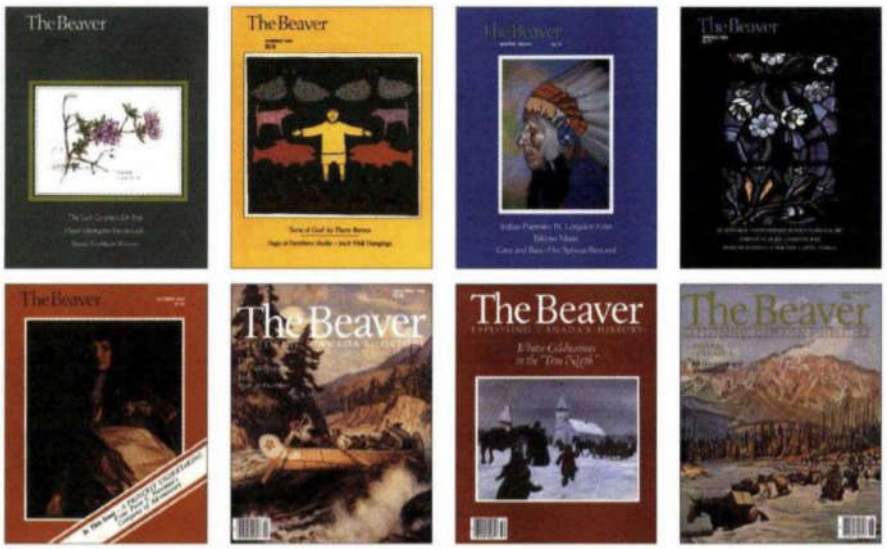

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Christopher Dafoe

'I speak to you as a citizen of Canada'

"As for myself, my course is clear.
A British subject I was born –
a British subject I will die."

John A. Macdonald got his wish. The "British Connection" was still firmly in place when Canada's first Prime Minister departed this life in June 1891. Britain was still "The Motherland" to most residents of English-speaking Canada, including many who were actually born here.

A Canadian of 1997, looking back from the threshold of the millennium, may wonder at this fervid attachment to the idea of being a British subject. Sir John could have said "A British subject I was born, a Canadian citizen I shall die" and most late-twentieth-century Canadians would applaud. After all, he was widely regarded as the father of his country. Why this attachment to the old homeland?

"I am a Quebecer. I am a French Canadian with all my heart. However, I am also deeply and irrevocably a Canadian. I am convinced that one does not prevent the other."

~ Pierre Trudeau

The Canadian of 1997 might assume that Canadian citizenship came into being automatically on 1 July 1867, as Canada took its place among the nations of the world. In the Confederation debates of the 1860s many had spoken of a "new nationality", but when the time came to proclaim the new country many aspects of the colonial past were retained. Canada's relations with other countries, for example, would be conducted by Britain and Canadians would be officially described as "British subjects domiciled in Canada". When travelling abroad they would carry British passports or a travel document issued under British auspices.

In the early years of Confederation, sentiment played a major role in the relationship between Canadians and "The Motherland". Until well into the twentieth century, in fact, many Canadians placed unquestioning loyalty to Britain above all else.

"A Canadian is somebody who knows how to make love in a canoe."

~ Pierre Berton

There were purely practical considerations as well. Britain was the most powerful nation on the planet, with an empire upon which the sun never set. Young Canada felt some of the comforting warmth from that never-setting sun and derived confidence and a feeling of security from a close association with Mother. Holders of the coveted British passport felt safe in an often dangerous world and reliance on Canadian travel documents seemed, to many, to constitute an unnecessary and possibly foolhardy risk. Kipling's description of the empire's family relationship – "Daughter am I in my Mother's house, but mistress in my own" – seemed entirely reasonable to many Canadians.

Others felt strongly that Canada was moving too slowly toward full nationhood. "We have decided that our own Supreme Court is not good enough for the people of Canada", wrote a Canadian journalist in 1925, "we have never had enough national spirit to provide ourselves with a distinctive national flag; we have people in Canada objecting to standing up when 'O Canada' is sung; we have trifled with the question of nationality and citizenship until the young Canadian is never quite sure whether he is a Canadian or a Hottentot because he had a Hottentot grandmother; we have put enthusiasms into every national day but our own; we have those who spoke up for Canada denounced as traitors." Commentators in both French and English Canada continued to ask when Canadians would begin acting as Canadians and offering their first loyalty and love to the land in which they lived. Others continued to call upon the government to confirm Canadian nationality in

"A Canadian is often a baffled man because he feels different from his British kindred and his American neighbours, sharply refuses to be lumped together with either of them, yet cannot make plain his difference."

~ J.B. Priestley

some official way. For many, being Canadian had nothing to do with laws or acts of Parliament. "I just am a Canadian," wrote Robertson Davies, speaking for many. "It is not a thing which you can escape from. It is like having blue eyes."

> *"A Canadian is someone who is going somewhere, but isn't sure where."*
>
> ~ W.L. Morton

It was, however, 1946 before a Canadian government felt that the time was ripe for the granting of official status to Canadian citizenship. Paul Martin Sr., a minister in the Mackenzie King cabinet, felt intense stirrings of patriotism during a post Second World War tour of Canadian battlefields in Europe and on his return to Ottawa convinced the ever-cautious and circumspect Mr. King that the moment had come to give official sanction to Canadian citizenship. Canada, after all, had existed as a nation without official citizens for 79 years. Perhaps the moment had come to let go of Mother's hand.

The resulting Canadian Citizenship Act (10 George VI, Chap.15) received royal assent on 27 June 1946 and came into effect on 1 January 1947, 50 years ago.

Many Canadians, especially French-speaking Quebecers, were surprised to learn that they had only just become fully-fledged Canadians, having thought of themselves all along as Canadian citizens. Now, however, it was official and a certificate was available to Canadians wishing to affirm their citizenship and to newcomers who qualified for inclusion in the new Canadian family. The first certificates of Canadian citizenship were handed out by justices of the Supreme Court at an Ottawa ceremony on 3 January 1947. The first recipient and "Canada's Number One Citizen" was none other than Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, grandson of the old rebel. The PM made a short speech – in English with the mandatory sentence in school French – which was broadcast on the CBC. "I speak to you as a citizen of Canada," he said, "On behalf of all Canadians I congratulate the new citizens who have just received their certificates... ." The new citizenship act continued, however, to emphasize that "A Canadian citizen is a British subject", a provision that would remain in effect, to the displeasure of many, until an updated citizenship act came into force in 1976.

> *"I'm very happy to be able to say that in the House of Commons today in my party we have members of Italian, Dutch, German, Scandinavian, Chinese and Ukrainian origin — and they are all Canadians."*
>
> ~ John G. Diefenbaker

During the 1930s, non-British immigrants, including Jews fleeing from Nazi terror, had been denied entry to Canada on the grounds that their admittance would alter the "essentially British" character of the country. In the aftermath of the world war, however, Canada's gates had been opened to admit a new generation of immigrants, including over 41,000 war brides and large numbers of "displaced persons" and other victims of the war. In the years ahead newcomers would arrive from all corners of the globe and Canada would continue to evolve into a new society.

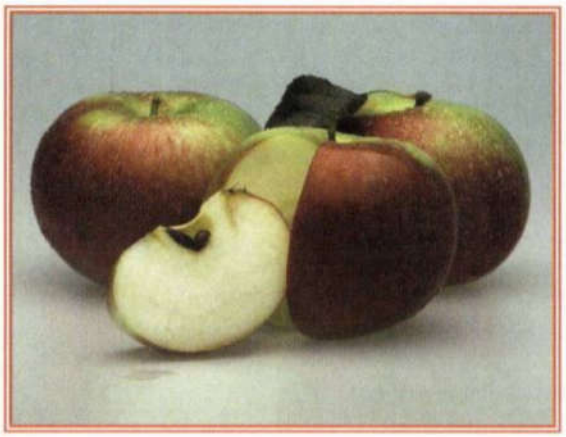
Canada, of course, has been a "mixed society" from the beginning. Some of the family were here to meet the first ships. Most of us are here because we or our ancestors rejected the intolerance of the Old World. As Canadian citizens we are in the process of creating a new world nationality and we have the opportunity to prove that all members of the human family can live in unity and harmony. If we cannot make it work as citizens of Canada, the prospects for the greater world are not good. As we celebrate 50 years of "official" Canadian citizenship, this "nation of immigrants" continues the task of creating a new nation and a new nationality in our part of North America. We could be an example to the world. ◆

National Archives of Canada

Under the Union Jack: Paul Martin Sr. (right) speaks to a Canadian citizenship ceremony, January 1947.

Mr. McIntosh's Wonderful Apple

By Shane Peacock



In the spring of 1811 John McIntosh was out in the woods of south-eastern Ontario, clearing land where the village of Dundela would soon appear, in Matilda Township, Dundas County. He was about to take his place in history.

McIntosh had come to this cold and unforgiving country in 1796 from the friendly, civilized region of the Mohawk Valley, fleeing family disdain for the unforgivable sin of falling in love with an unacceptable mate. He had settled on land near the town of Iroquois on the St. Lawrence River, but now the woman who had caused such upheaval in his life was gone and he was several miles further north, married to Hannah Doran and trying to tame the land he had traded with her brother. Only one-quarter of an acre of this so-called farm had ever been cleared and even that section of the wilderness had grown up again, the young trees towering above his head. But in amongst them, he kept coming upon little seedlings, strong and youthful, and decidedly unlike the others. Apples, thought John McIntosh, apples growing in the Canadian bush? He spared them.

About a dozen seedlings were soon transplanted to his garden nearby. By the following year all but one had died. He nursed it and it slowly grew. When it bore fruit, red blushed and round, he tasted it, tart on the tongue.

Today the McIntosh is produced in greater quantities than any other apple in Canada and the north-eastern United States, and is grown in orchards around the world. Every tree, and therefore every McIntosh apple that has ever been eaten or put into a pie or into juice or cider, is a direct descendant of that little seedling that mysteriously appeared in the Canadian woods and tenaciously clung to life. It was, when John McIntosh found it, the first and the only one of its kind in the world. To this day no one is certain how it got there.

The way in which apples reproduce when unchecked by human interference creates much of the mystery. Apple trees are not "self-fruitful"; in other words, the seeds within their apples will not reproduce the same variety as the parent tree. Only by grafting a variety onto the trunk of another tree can that variety be maintained. The orphan that McIntosh found in the bush that day, likely grown from seeds of an apple core tossed on the ground by a passerby, was naturally cross-pollinated, an offspring of unknown ancestors.

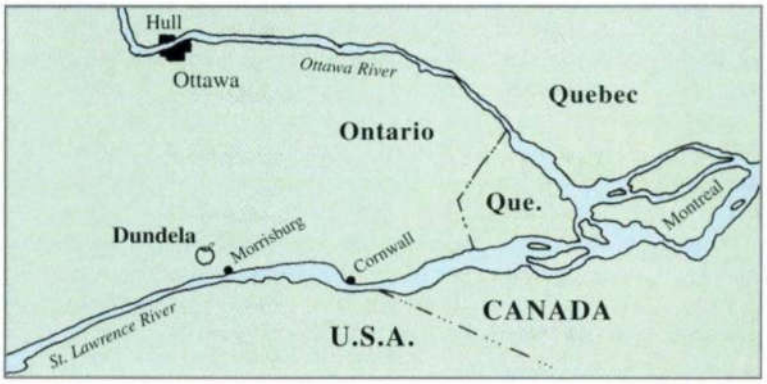
The apple most often theorized as a parent is the Fameuse, known in English Canada as the Snow. This is based on several common characteristics and the Fameuse's popularity in Quebec before 1811. There were no apples (other than crab) in North America prior to the appearance of Europeans; by the seventeenth century they had made their way westward with settlers and it would make sense that travelling Quebecers, moving through the woods around Matilda Township, 95 kilometres west of their border, would be carrying Fameuse apples.

But in 1970 W.H. Upshall of the Horticultural Experiment Station at Vineland, Ontario, maintained that trials with the Fameuse as progenitor had not been successful, and suggested Fall St. Lawrence and the

Photo on this page courtesy of the Ontario Apple Marketing Commission. Opposite page, clockwise from upper left: Neglected site of the original McIntosh tree, Dundela, Ontario; An 1896 advertisement in Olive McIntosh's possession; Piece of wood from the original tree; McIntosh apples grown today in a commercial orchard (courtesy Foodland Ontario); Tree grown from a graft of the original McIntosh tree, Smyth's Apple Orchards, Dundela. All photos, unless otherwise credited, by Sophie Kneisel.

THE SITE OF
THE ORIGINAL
McINTOSH APPLE
TREE - 1906

APPLES!
I have a large quantity of No. 1 Apples
FOR SALE
principally McIntosh Red, which is known to be the best winter apple on the market. To be sold in small or large quantities to suit purchasers. Also a large quantity of
Fruit Trees
of all the varieties best adapted to our climate.
ALLEN McINTOSH,
NURSERYMAN,
Dundela, Ont.
Fall, 1896.


Hull
Ottawa
Ottawa River
Quebec
Ontario
Que.
Montreal
Dundela
Morrisburg
Cornwall
St. Lawrence River
CANADA
U.S.A.

Alexander as potential forebears. This is contrary to conclusions drawn by other experts, like Roger Yepsen, who unequivocally stated in his 1994 book *Apples,* that the McIntosh is "a talented cross between Fameuse and Detroit Red." More than 80 years earlier *The Canadian Apple Growers' Guide* had hedged its bets, simply calling the Mac, "of Fameuse type". So the mystery of the McIntosh, probed only by educated guesses, remains.

John McIntosh likely cared little about where his wonderful new apple tree came from – all he knew was that he had to reproduce it. But his experiments with seeds kept giving him other varieties. His one tree remained, ready to disappear from history should it be destroyed.

A century and a half later Olive McIntosh, widow of John's great-grandson, sits in her home in Morrisburg, Ontario, not far from the Dundela homestead where she once lived. She opens an old wooden box filled with family heirlooms, the greatest of which should be a national treasure: a chunk of the original McIntosh tree. Setting it on the kitchen table, she explains how John solved the reproduction problem: "Luckily, a travelling hired man just happened to come along one day (about 1835) and he showed John and his son Allan how to graft." Thus the McIntosh survived.

Olive, whose children and grandchildren carry the McIntosh name in the area, likes to tell stories about Allan. It isn't hard to see why. He was not only an extraordinary character, but deserves much credit for making the Mac what it is today. By the late 1830s he was in charge of the family nursery and orchard, succeeding his mother Hannah, the real apple expert of the previous generation (at first, Macs were called "Grannys" in her honour). He began grafting in a serious way, producing bushels upon bushels of what were becoming known as McIntosh Reds. This bearded, ingenious man also experimented with fungicides (the Mac was susceptible to scabs), hewn cedar troughs to drain the orchard, and cross-pollination. He sold, and apparently gave away, trees throughout eastern Ontario and the north-eastern United States, where he sold apples to McIntosh relatives in Vermont. He was known in the Matilda area as a medicine man and travelling preacher. Olive's family treasures include fire-and-brimstone sermons written in his hand. Glancing through their pages, one imagines Allan booming some of its contents at slightly shaken audiences, admonishing them to be on guard for "Satan and his hellish crew".

Despite Allan and his brother Sandy's efforts, it was many years before the McIntosh Red became prominent. Indeed it wasn't until 1870, nearly a quarter of a century after John's death, that it was officially "introduced" and named; it made its first appearance in print six years later (in *Fruits and Fruit Trees of America*); and began to sell in truly large numbers after 1900. The Mac's hardiness, appearance and taste made it a contender from birth, but it was only when turn-of-the-century advances in the quality and availability of sprays took care of its scabbing problem that it realized its incredible commercial potential.

Allan McIntosh with the original McIntosh Red tree around the time it was damaged by fire in the 1890s.

By that time things had changed at Dundela. An 1894 fire that burned down the family home badly damaged the original tree. Though Allan made extensive efforts to nurse it back to health, it produced its last crop in 1908 and fell over two years later, almost exactly a century after it had been discovered in the woods. Allan died in 1899, Sandy in 1906, so it was grandson Harvey (1863-1940) who was at the helm when the family apple became world-famous.

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, it accounts for more than half of the 17 million bushels of apples produced in Canada every year, and is our most commonly grown fruit: 130,000 metric tonnes come from Ontario alone, though it also thrives in Quebec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia (where it was introduced in 1910). In the U.S. it ranks behind only the two Delicious varieties and has a personal computer named for it; overseas it is one of few successful North American varieties.

It is hard to imagine anything that we grow for consumption that is more Canadian than the Mac. But today at the site of the first McIntosh apple tree in the little village of Dundela there is only token recognition. Drive south-east about 45 minutes from Ottawa or north 10 minutes off the 401 and turn onto county road 18 and you will see for yourself. But don't blink, or you'll miss it. There is no orchard on the McIntosh homestead anymore, only a couple of houses and broken-down barns. A plaque, erected by the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board, stands a few steps from the road, next to a monument put up in

1912 bearing the erroneous information that John McIntosh found his seedling in 1796. The latter also tells any who happen by that the original tree was some "20 rods" (100 metres) to the north.

Walk around to the rear of the property in search of that historic site and you will see how we treat our national treasures. Though local residents will tell you to have a look, you probably shouldn't, because once you are wading through the knee-high grass, you are on private property. The owner, who insists in letters to various newspaper editors that he is angry about sightseers and would be happy to show them around if they would only ask, lives 80 kilometres away in Ottawa. If you do venture through the hole ripped wide in the rusty fence, you will find yourself looking for a needle in a haystack, or at least a golf ball in decidedly long rough.

Finally, there it is, a little stone marker nearly buried beneath weeds behind a collapsing barn. "The site of the original McIntosh apple tree. 1811-1906".

A minute down the county road to the east Sandra Beckstead sells Macs by the ton at Smyth's Apple Orchards, a thriving 100-acre tract begun in the mid-1800s by her ancestor Sam Smyth, neighbour and colleague of Allan McIntosh. A tree grown from a graft of the original McIntosh sits in their front yard. She is bright and friendly, a breezy proponent of apples and apple eating. Only when the state of the McIntosh homestead is discussed does her mood dip.

"They have signs on the 401 for the marina and the golf course and that sort of thing, but nothing for

The 1996 Canadian Silver Dollar coin, designed by artist Roger Hill, to commemorate "Canada's Premiere Apple". Photo courtesy of the Royal Canadian Mint.

Apple harvest at Abbotsford, Quebec, 1930s. (National Archives of Canada)

Foodland Ontario

Above left: Apple logo courtesy of Ontario Apple Marketing Commission.

Above right: The McIntosh accounts for over half of the 17 million bushels of apples produced in Canada every year.

The Macintosh Computer

When Steven Jobs and Stephen Wozniak started their computer company in 1976 (in the garage of the home of Jobs' parents in Cupertino, California) they wanted a fresh, non-traditional name for their new personal computer. Jobs in particular was an advocate of natural foods, so when someone suggested "Apple" – a food the health-conscious Jobs was fond of – at a brainstorming session just prior to the deadline for filing a company name, it was an image that appealed to Jobs and the others.

Within four years the personal computer industry boomed. By the end of 1982 there were more than 100 companies manufacturing personal computers. In 1983 Apple entered the Fortune 500.

According to Frank Rose in his book *West of Eden*, Jef Raskin, a former college professor and longtime computer hobbyist who worked for Apple, got permission in 1981 to "build his own dream computer. He wanted it to be inexpensive, portable, and as easy to use as an appliance. He called it Macintosh, [*sic*] after his favorite kind of apple."

The Macintosh® was introduced in January 1984; in January 1997 the company shipped its 26-millionth "Mac". Apple Canada was established in 1980 as Apple's first subsidiary outside the United States. In June 1995 they shipped their one-millionth computer, to a school in Nova Scotia.

Photographs and information courtesy of Apple Canada Inc.

something that is part of our history, something that we all should know about and be proud of," she says. She works hard at redressing this wrong. In one corner of her store, where information fills the walls, and life-size dolls of John and Allan McIntosh look on, you can take a veritable history class; and every year school children are invited to the orchard. Customers are told not only about the Mac and its heritage but of the many world-renowned apples it has parented: the Cortland, the Lobo, the Joyce, the Melba, the Macoun and the Early Mac, to name a few.

This past summer a few louder voices joined Sandra's. The *Ottawa Citizen* published an editorial decrying the political circumlocution and apathy that has left this potential symbol invisible amongst weeds (provincial funding has fizzled, the township has no money to buy the land and the county's roadsign campaign has been derailed, or at least delayed, because of bureaucratic changes). That same month the *Toronto Star* printed a front-page story entitled "Rotting to the Core" with a photo of Olive's son Harvey on the unkempt site. The Mac also appears on the 1996 Canadian silver dollar, though oddly it commemorates the 200th anniversary of John McIntosh's arrival in Canada rather than celebrating the year he found the tree.

The story of the single seedling in the northern bush that parented millions of one of the world's most popular apples, is an intriguing and romantic one. But Canadians, ostensibly anxious to have national symbols, have somehow left it by the roadside. ◆

Shane Peacock is the author of "The Great Farini", published in 1995 by Viking.

J. M. Bumsted

The Trial of Ambroise Lépine

On 15 September 1873, William N. Farmer appeared in Winnipeg before Justice of the Peace John H. O'Donnell to lay an information against "Louis Riel, Ambroise Lépine and others" for the murder of Thomas Scott. Both Farmer and O'Donnell were Canadians who had been imprisoned at Upper Fort Garry during the Red River disturbances of 1869-70. O'Donnell had been one of the party inside the house of John Schultz – it also included Thomas Scott – that had surrendered to the Métis in December 1869. He had been released at about the same time that Farmer was himself imprisoned. Farmer had been part of the band of Canadians who had marched to the settlement from Portage la Prairie in February 1870, ostensibly to release prisoners like O'Donnell held by the Métis. Instead, on their way back from Kildonan to Portage the remnants of this group, which included Thomas Scott, had been seized by the Provisional Government.

Riel's associate Ambroise Lépine: Was he really guilty of the murder of Thomas Scott?

On that September day in 1873 O'Donnell issued a warrant, and three constables succeeded in arresting Ambroise Lépine at his home two days later. Lépine was playing with one of his children and offered no resistance.

The Manitoba government was extremely unhappy with this private initiative. O'Donnell was stripped of his office. Nevertheless the warrant and arrest were allowed to stand as legal, and the province braced for a confrontation between its major linguistic factions. Just over a year later, a Manitoba jury composed of six anglophones and six francophones found Lépine guilty of murder after only a two and one-half hour deliberation, but recommended mercy. The judge rejected the recommendation on grounds that the defendant had shown no mercy to Thomas Scott. This was the first major criminal trial carried out under the recently-introduced legal system of the province. Many observers felt that "British justice", as much as Ambroise Lépine, was on trial in Manitoba. At the end of the trial, most contemporaries found British justice vindicated. Whether Lépine had received a fair trial is another matter entirely.

The warrant of 15 September 1873 was not the first that had been issued for the arrest of Ambroise Lépine on charges of murder. Nevertheless, Lépine was not in hiding, and his arrest and subsequent trial caused quite a stir in the province. In order to appreciate why the Lépine affair was still alive in 1873 and the arrest such high politics in Manitoba, we must return to the events of 1869-70, when the residents of Red River, led by the franco phone Métis, had raised a resistance to the transfer of the settlement from the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company to the authority of the Dominion of Canada. Insisting that their rights must be respected, the people of Red River had organized a Provisional Government to negotiate with the Canadians. The resistance had been conducted with little loss of life. The most obvious piece of gratuitous violence had been the execution by firing squad on 4 March 1870 of the Orangeman Thomas Scott, following a hearing by a quasi-military tribunal. Ambroise Lépine was

The official thinking from the beginning had been that an amnesty could be declared when feelings had cooled down and people had forgotten about the issues. Unfortunately, public memories proved longer than any politician had anticipated.

Protestant Hothead

Thomas Scott, pictured here in Belfast, Ireland, shortly before he emigrated to Canada in 1863, arrived at Red River in 1869 as a labourer and was soon associated with those of the "Canadian Party" who advocated violent resistance to Riel and the Métis Provisional Government.

Imprisoned in Upper Fort Garry, Scott antagonized his captors and was tried and shot on 4 March 1870 for rebelling against the Provisional Government and for striking his guards and using abusive language. Appeals for mercy from both sides in the dispute were ignored.

His death set off a storm of protest in Canada and became a cause of bad feeling between Protestant Ontario and Roman Catholic Quebec. He was mourned as a martyr by the anti-Catholic Orange Order.

Adjutant-General of the Provisional Government, and the Scott affair was thus within his bailiwick.

The people of Ontario, stirred up by the activities of a small band of Canadian agitators known as "Canada First", had responded negatively to the Scott execution. Delegates of the Provisional Government who arrived in Ontario in April 1870, found themselves facing legal proceedings for Scott's "murder". From these they were extricated only with difficulty by the Canadian government. The Dominion used the Ontario revulsion to the Scott affair as an excuse for not officially recognizing the Red River delegates as representing the Provisional Government. Instead, it negotiated with them informally as representatives of the people of Red River. The delegates had instructions not to begin negotiations until Canada had promised an amnesty for any and all illegal acts carried out in the course of the resistance. But representatives of the Canadian government, chiefly Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George-Etienne Cartier, were both experienced lawyers and politicians, skilled at suggesting more than was actually promised.

In their double-game the Canadians were supported by representatives of the British government. In any event, while Red River's delegates were persuaded that Canada had agreed to a complete amnesty as a precondition for discussions, the Dominion insisted officially that no such promises had ever been made. Moreover, the Canadians – including Cartier – were adamant that no amnesty could ever include the crime of murder. This was well in keeping with nineteenth-century Imperial policy toward insurgency. In the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny in India, for example, the crime of murder was specifically excluded from blanket amnesties given to the mutineers. At best, Cartier hoped that an amnesty covering all acts short of murder could be employed as part of the defence in any subsequent trial charging that offence. Any general amnesty still would leave Riel and his colleagues open to a charge of murder; but the insurgent leaders could then plead not guilty, and adopt as a line of defence the argument that the deed had been perpetrated in the exercise of assumed and usurped political powers for which an amnesty had been granted.

The Red River delegates, led by Father Noël-Joseph Ritchot, never succeeded in translating unofficial promises into written guarantees. They appreciated the difficulties the Canadians faced if they agreed publicly to a total amnesty, given the groundswell of hostile public opinion emanating from Ontario. They thought, nonetheless, that the private promises of the Canadian representatives, particularly those of Cartier, carried more moral authority than was actually the case. Moreover, neither Father Ritchot nor Archbishop Taché back in Red River seemed to realize that according to British law and practice, murder was not a crime which an amnesty could cover.

In any event, whatever hopes the leaders of the Provisional Government may have entertained for any sort of early amnesty were finally dashed by the arrival of the Wolseley Expedition in late August 1870. Garnet Wolseley entered the settlement as an armed conqueror. Louis Riel and the leaders of his government (including Lépine and William O'Donoghue, who were most frequently associated with Riel in the blame for the death of Scott) were forced to flee from the soldiers, and warrants for their arrests were soon issued.

Feelings ran high in Manitoba in late 1870. The new civilian government of the province had no intention of provoking a confrontation by actually attempting to bring members of the Provisional Government to "justice". Neither Macdonald nor Cartier believed that a local jury composed partly of Métis would find the leaders of the Provisional Government guilty of criminal charges, and acquittals ran the risk of inflaming Ontario public opinion. Informally, the incoming volunteers found some measure of revenge by chasing Elzéar Goulet, who was reputed to have been part of the Scott firing squad, into the Red River where he drowned. The soldiers harassed other individuals as well. Louis Riel and

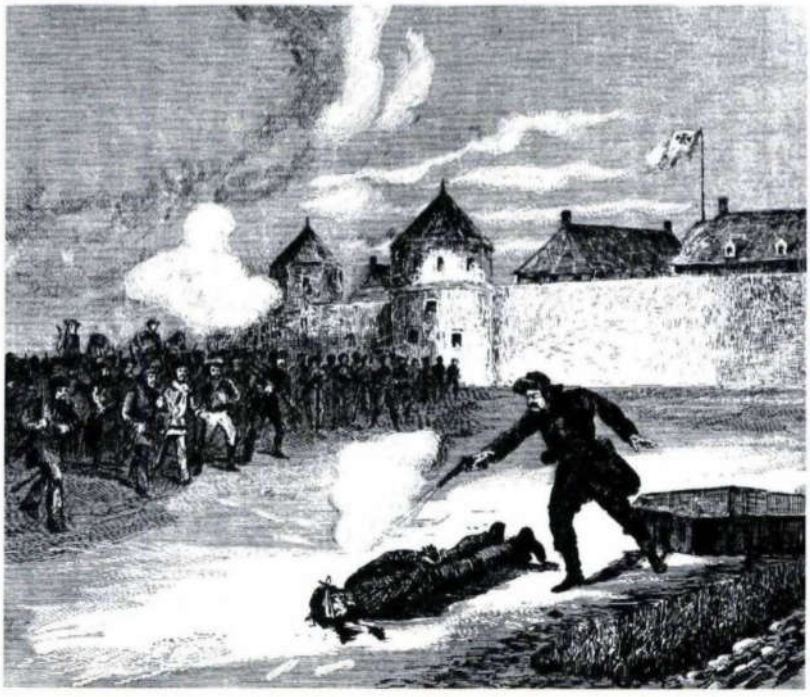
Ambroise Lépine were allowed to remain at large, although the Ontario parliament offered a reward ($5,000) for anyone who brought them to book.

At the time of the Fenian menace in 1871 Riel and Lépine assisted the government by helping to raise a Métis volunteer force. Late that same year the government attempted to avoid the embarrassment the two men's presence in the province provoked by unofficially paying them to leave Manitoba. In Minnesota exile both Riel and Lépine felt most insecure, however, since they were exposed to assassination attempts and American bounty hunters. They thus preferred to return to Manitoba and live quietly among their own people. The government regarded these returns as a breach of faith, but did nothing more about it. The official thinking from the beginning had been that an amnesty could be declared when feelings had cooled down and people had forgotten about the issues. Unfortunately, public memories proved longer than any politician had anticipated.

The state of limbo in which Riel and Lépine continued to find themselves was as unsatisfactory for them as it was for the governments of Manitoba and Canada. Lépine may thus in some ways have welcomed his arrest in 1873, since it promised to bring matters to a head. No evidence exists to suggest that the actions of Messrs. Farmer and O'Donnell were anything other than private initiatives, although it has to be said that Louis Riel was making more than a bit of a nuisance of himself politically by threatening to run for both provincial and federal seats. Forcing Riel to become an open fugitive from justice was certainly in the best interests of the government at this time, whatever its effect on his former lieutenant. Some solution to the Scott case might also resolve the anxieties of hundreds of residents of Manitoba, whose levying of rebellion against the Crown in 1869-70 had never been officially forgiven.

As a legal question the death of Scott was either simple or incredibly complex, depending on the context in which it was put. There seemed little doubt that a prosecution could prove that Thomas Scott had been executed by firing squad on the morning of 4 March 1870. Whether that execution was murder, as Farmer's information had insisted, or even whether Manitoba courts had jurisdiction to try the case, were other matters entirely. Lépine was brought for preliminary examination before Mr. Justice Louis Bétournay at the Police Magistrate's court at Fort Garry on 23 September 1873. The examination was deferred three days and was subsequently opened by Bétournay, who had not been resident in Red River at the time of the rebellion. Messrs.Cornish and Thibaudeau appeared for the prosecution, and Messrs. Royal, Dubuc, and Girard for the defence. Sir Joseph Dubuc, speaking in French, immediately raised the question of jurisdiction, and the argument was repeated by Joseph Royal in English.

The defence insisted that jurisdiction was a real issue because the circumstances of Red River before Confederation were quite different from that of any other province. By Imperial Statute of 1803 and 1821, the courts of both Upper and Lower Canada, respectively, had been given jurisdiction over criminal cases (including murder) in the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Imperial legislation had never been repealed, and as Royal stated the claim, "from the time of the resignation of the Government of Assiniboia, in 1869, until Canada assumed the Courts by Act of Parliament in 1871, the jurisdiction in the North-West belonged to the Imperial Government." Since the offence before the court had a distinctly "political" aspect, Lépine's lawyers urged caution by the court. It is worth noting that the defence did not at this point raise the question of jurisdiction in the form that Lépine himself would subsequently do. It did not maintain that the Provisional Government had replaced a moribund Hudson's Bay Company as the *de facto* authority in Red River or that, by negotiating with the delegates of the Provisional Government, the Dominion had turned that *de facto* authority to a *de jure* one. Testimony



In this contemporary illustration Thomas Scott gets the coup de grâce, Upper Fort Garry, 1870.

Celebrated trial lawyer Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau joined the defence team.

before a parliamentary inquiry in 1874 (before the final trial but after these preliminary hearings) would demonstrate that while such a line of argument would be highly controversial, it might be quite sustainable. The defence relied instead on a strictly constitutional argument.

Francis Cornish for the prosecution insisted that this court could not decide jurisdiction, but merely whether there was sufficient evidence to send the prisoner to trial. He denied that the case had any political significance whatsoever. The court decided it could not determine the question of jurisdiction, but moved to an examination of witnesses, a process that took five days. At the conclusion of the testimony, on 9 October, the prisoner was permitted to read an address in French that denied the competency of the court to hear the accusation. The address went on to insist that the testimony just concluded demonstrated that it was "the political man that is aimed at in this prosecution, and not the pretended murderer." The proceedings, said Lépine, trampled upon the arrangements made in the spring of 1870 between Canada and the delegates of a Provisional Government supported by over three-quarters of the people of Red River. He further protested being singled out "to bear exclusively the responsibility of acts done by a Government acting in the plenitude of powers with which the people of a country had publicly and voluntarily invested it." He again declared that the accusation was not motivated by a spirit of justice, but by political passions and feelings. Lépine thus himself suggested a number of possible lines of defence, to which his counsel added the argument that it had not yet been proven that Scott was dead.

To the outside observer, legal proceedings often appear to take place in an insulated never-never world of abstractionism in which legal procedures take the place of the quest for truth or justice. This is particularly true of major court cases in the past, where matters often turn on abstruse legal points and general assumptions seemingly acceptable at the time which no longer will bear careful scrutiny. Such was certainly the case in the trial of Ambroise Lépine. The prosecution self-righteously insisted that "justice" demanded that Ambroise Lépine be tried. Many observers at the time insisted that the success of the rule of law in Manitoba hinged on a successful completion of this case. Few in our own time thoroughly familiar with the events that led up to Lépine's court appearance in Magistrate's Court, however, would doubt that, as Lépine insisted from the first, this was indeed a very political trial.

Whether its political nature was sufficient to impeach the subsequent proceedings is another matter, but the fact that neither the prosecution nor the courts ever acknowledged the political nature of the case does render the whole procedure suspect. Ambroise Lépine was no ordinary murderer and this was no ordinary criminal trial. It was a showpiece trial in which the very legitimacy of the governments of Canada and Manitoba, and the behaviour of their officials, had to be protected as much as Ambroise Lépine needed to be convicted. Given this reality, there could be no fair or just outcome arrived at through the judicial process. The ultimate decision had been determined well in advance. The courts merely went through a charade of procedural fairness. In a series of decisions, they stripped the killing of Scott of all its historical context and mitigation. The defence was left with little to argue except that there was no body to prove Scott's death, a contention so manifestly weak as to be laughable.

The judicial process began on 14 October 1873 with the decision of the Magistrate's Court. Mr. Justice Bétournay found there was conclusive proof of the execution of Thomas Scott. He refused to recognize the existence of a "pretended government" or the arguments against his jurisdiction, reserving the latter decisions to a higher court. He totally ignored the arguments of the defence about the political nature of the trial. Finding a "made-out case," he committed the prisoner for trial before the next criminal assizes. Lépine was sent to the provincial penitentiary at Lower Fort Garry until the next step in the process.

An extra term of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench opened on Wednesday, 12 November, with Mr. Justice J. C. McKeagney on the bench. Like Bétournay, McKeagney was a political appointee of limited experience and capabilities, described by one contemporary as a "right-minded and conscientious non-entity." Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris felt that assertive lawyers could easily "bully" both Bétournay and McKeagney. In the latter's court three days later a grand jury found a true bill against Lépine, charging him with the murder of Thomas Scott. The jury of 12 consisted of six men labelled "half-breeds" in the official record, only three of whom had French names. The jury also included W. A. Farmer, the individual who had laid the information which had begun the legal process. Farmer subsequently explained in his trial testimony that the court had been short of jurors and had pressed him into service. This anomaly seemed to bother no one and did not become a legal issue. Lépine was arraigned under the indictment. His counsel wanted him to question the jurisdiction of the court rather than plead; the prosecution wanted him to enter a plea before questioning the jurisdiction. With the consent of the Attorney-General he was eventually allowed to put in a plea of "not guilty" subject to the plea of jurisdiction. This "concession" was granted, said the Attorney-General, because "the prosecution was not one of vengeance but one of justice," and it was important that the matter "be brought to an issue."

Lépine ultimately got little sympathy from the court on the larger issue of jurisdiction. Mr. Royal maintained that since the territory including Red River had not been transferred to Canada before 23 June 1870, the Dominion had no power or right to delegate power to the province to try felonies committed before that period. The relevant jurisdiction in the interim was covered by Imperial statute calling for trial in the courts of Upper and Lower Canada.

Because the status of the Provisional Government was not raised at this point, the Crown had an easier run at the jurisdiction question. It maintained, through Attorney-General Henry J. Clarke, that the Hudson's Bay Company had transferred all their rights and powers to Canada under an Imperial Act of Parliament passed in 1868. It then insisted that although English criminal law, as then in force in the two Canadas, had been extended to HBC territory by Imperial statute of 1803, the Imperial statutes of 1803, 1821, and 1859 had not removed the jurisdiction of the HBC, but merely provided a concurrent one involving the courts of the Canadas. Imperial legislation of 1868 had continued the power of the HBC courts until otherwise enacted by the Parliament of Canada, a provision continued in the various Canadian statutes applying to the West of 1869 and 1870. The Manitoba Act of 1871 specifically mentioned the HBC General Court and extended its power to any subsequent court established by the province. The Attorney-General thus insisted, "if there is any force in statutory enactments; if there is any meaning in the word justice; if there is any power in the Crown of Great Britain to punish crime, this Court has legal jurisdiction, power, and force to satisfy the ends of justice, and to punish any crime committed within these North-West Territories, wherever the Hudson's Bay Company's power extended."

Given the complicated history rehearsed on the question of the law, the very force of an unqualified insistence probably gave the McKeagney court pause. Uncertainty over the law – particularly the concurrent jurisdictions – probably explains why the Canadian government did not immediately upon its takeover proclaim the criminal law of Canada in force throughout the West. What the Attorney-General did not note in his arguments was the existence of a whole series of facts that cast considerable doubt on his categorical conclusion. The Council of Assiniboia, for example, had twice introduced the law of England into the settlement (in 1837 and again in 1864). The Imperial government had never recognized the judicial authority of the

Elzéar Goulet: chased into the Red River.

Hudson's Bay Company, especially in capital cases, before the statute of 1868. The Canadian government had insisted that the Wolseley Expedition be conducted under British authority and led by a British military force, because it had no standing in the West in 1870. Furthermore, the Imperial Parliament had repealed the Canada Jurisdiction Act in 1872, which certainly implied that this legislation had been in force in 1870. In 1873 the Canadian government had by statute wiped out any problem for the Northwest outside of Manitoba by extending the whole of Canadian criminal law to the North-West Territories. Confusion over the law would subsequently lead the Manitoba Legislature to pass an act, which declared English law as of 15 July 1870 to be and to have been in force in the province. This declaration would be legislatively endorsed by the Dominion Parliament. Retroactive legislation always suggests previous confusion. The only time that certainty about the state of the law in Red River in 1870 ever existed was in the trial of Ambroise Lépine.

Subsequent legal historians have been quite unable to come to a consensus on the question of whose law (and by implication whose jurisdiction) would have applied to Red River in March of 1870, even if there was not in addition the question of whether the Provisional Government had effectively superseded the Hudson's Bay Company and its courts. Leaving aside the continuity issue, in many ways Lépine's defence counsel would have been well advised to concentrate less on jurisdiction than on asking what law (and what legal procedures) were in force in March 1870 under which Ambroise Lépine should be tried. Here the possibilities were endless. A variety of dates and sources could be advanced for the particular criminal law in effect. Moreover, while it was true that the Quarterly Court of Assiniboia had conducted murder trials, it was also true that its criminal proceedings in such trials had been quite idiosyncratic. The judge had often acted as prosecuting attorney, for example, and in the absence of trained lawyers the adversarial system had seldom been employed.

Mr. Justice McKeagney was understandably not anxious to rule on the question of jurisdiction. He deferred an immediate decision, meanwhile allowing Lépine to be released on bail on grounds that he had not run away before his arrest and was not likely to do so now. In February 1874 McKeagney again deferred a decision, regarding himself as not "competent or justified in deciding a question of such great importance without a full bench." If no Chief Justice was appointed by the next term, he and Bétournay would have the question re-argued and would make a decision. The Attorney-General tried to bully McKeagney into giving "a decision on a question so simple as that of your own jurisdiction as a judge of the Court," openly charging him with shirking his duty and casting doubts on his own competency. But the judge refused to be budged. Contemporaries regarded McKeagney's position as one of weakness and lack of competence, but those qualities were undoubtedly combined with his realization that this decision was not as "simple" as the Attorney-General wanted to make it.

A view of Winnipeg looking north, from Upper Fort Garry, 1870. (Manitoba Museum).

By the June 1874 session of the court, Chief Justice Edmund Burke Wood had taken his place on the bench. Wood, who was from Ontario, was prepared to be decisive. He had only one arm as a result of a shooting accident, and he compensated for his handicap with total assurance and self-confidence in his abilities. Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie had passed over him for his new Liberal cabinet, but rewarded him with the Manitoba appointment. Wood was, Mackenzie reported to the Manitoba Lieutenant-Governor,

"perhaps too impulsive for a judge, but that is a good quality in a new country." Wood heard the arguments of the defence and prosecution on the jurisdictional question, and then proceeded to read a lengthy opinion obviously prepared in advance. He began by outlining the Imperial legislation in some detail. He then observed that the court of Rupert's Land had tried civil and criminal cases (including capital offenses) for 30 years without having its jurisdiction questioned by the Imperial government. Indeed, this court was – he insisted – fully recognized in the last clause of the Rupert's Land Act of 1868, which continued its powers until otherwise enacted by the Parliament of Canada. Despite the Imperial legislation, the Canadian courts had only a concurrent rather than an exclusive jurisdiction.

Wood further ruled that the offence at issue had been committed on 4 March 1870 under the jurisdiction of the General Court of the Hudson's Bay Company, which continued until 15 July 1870 (the transfer of the territory to Canada) and then onward until the organization of the Supreme Court of Manitoba. The Manitoba Act of 1871 specifically stated that no person would be liable to any punishment or penalty for any act done before its passage that he would not have been liable to under the laws in force at the time the act was done. Wood further denied that Confederation had swept away the concurrent jurisdiction of the Canadian courts and returned jurisdiction to the Imperial Parliament, calling the arguments based on the British North America Act "strained." Without at any time considering the question of the status of the Provisional Government and its effect on continuity, the Chief Justice saw no interruption of jurisdiction to prevent the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench from hearing the case. Wood had offered a plausible interpretation of the written record. It was one which suggested, however, that he was not prepared to entertain seriously any contextual arguments in the death of Scott. He would bear out this suspicion in his eventual charge to the jury.

Wood allowed the prisoner to plead "not guilty" and bound him over for trial in October 1874. By then, Joseph Dubuc had become provincial Attorney-General and so could not prosecute. The prosecution was thus headed by Francis Cornish, assisted by Stewart Macdonald. Joseph Royal headed a defence team which had been augmented by Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau from Montreal, one of French Canada's leading Conservative politicians and its most celebrated trial lawyer. Over the years he would win 21 of 22 murder cases. Chapleau volunteered for this service and paid his own expenses.

Crown Prosecutor Francis Cornish: "foul murder".

As in most such controversial cases, the make-up of the jury in the actual trial would be absolutely crucial. Earlier observers such as Sir George-Etienne Cartier had doubted that any of those involved in the death of Scott could be convicted by a jury of Red River residents, at least if the convention (subsequently translated into law) of composing the juries of half anglophones and half francophones was observed. Given the importance of jury selection, the surviving court records are quite unsatisfactory on this point. We do know that four prospective jurors were challenged by the Crown, and "about 16" by the defence. We do not know whether the 16 challenges had exhausted the defence's allotment, or how long the jury panel list was. The defence subsequently complained about list manipulation. In any event, a jury was eventually empanelled, consisting of the requisite six anglophones and six francophones.

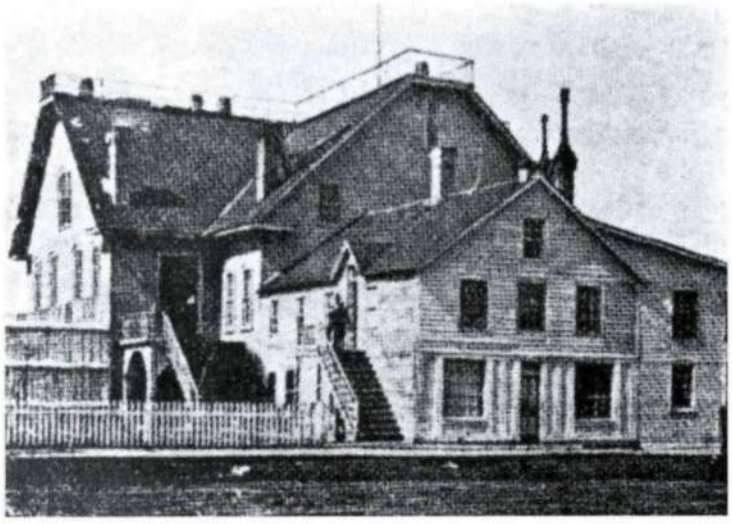
In his opening remarks to this jury, Crown Prosecutor Cornish made clear the prosecution's strategy to concentrate strictly on the deed . It was "foul murder" and if Lépine was found fully implicated, he was guilty. Over the next 13 days of the trial, a battery of witnesses appeared on the stand to be questioned by the prosecution and the defence. This testimony provides us with as much evidence as we will ever have on the events immediately surrounding the death of Thomas Scott. Most of the prosecution witnesses were quite prepared to describe what they had seen, although there was a curious inability to remember names of many of the crucial actors. Almost without exception, the prosecution only brought to the stand Métis who were regarded as "loyal" to the new government. It called no "hostile witnesses".

The prosecution's witnesses therefore included few individuals still close associates of Riel or Lépine – or close to the centre of events in 1870.

According to the testimony, Scott was tried in French on the evening of 3 March 1870, with Lépine presiding. The "court" consisted of Janvier Ritchot, André Nault, Elzéar Goulet, Elzéar Lagimodière, Baptiste Lépine, Joseph Delorme, and Joseph Nolin as secretary. Several trial witnesses testified that there were rumours of Scott's execution around the fort for weeks before that date. The chief witnesses against Scott were Louis Riel and Joseph Delorme; none were called on his behalf, and he himself was not heard in his own defence. Scott was accused of having rebelled against the Provisional Government and striking both the president of the Provisional Government and his guards. There was no documentary record of the Scott tribunal available, although one had been kept, and the only witness who testified to the events of the tribunal was Joseph Nolin. In his prosecution summation at Lépine's trial, Francis Cornish insisted that one charge had been that Scott had broken his oath to the Provisional Government, an oath he had never taken. This dubious interpretation of the charge of taking up arms against the Provisional Government was never contradicted. The hearing lasted less than three hours and ended with Richot moving and Nault seconding a motion for execution. Only Baptiste Lépine objected to the death penalty, on grounds that the resistance had been without bloodshed to this point. The testimony never established clearly exactly what Scott had done to deserve death, although by Anglo-Canadian standards he was obviously condemned by a kangaroo court without due process.

Chief Justice Edmund Burke Wood: "Perhaps too impulsive for a judge ..."

Below: The Manitoba Court House, Main Street, Winnipeg, circa 1874.



The trial testimony made clear that unlike the tribunal convicting Scott, his execution had been an amazingly public ceremony, conducted before as many as 150 witnesses, all of whom learned about it by word of mouth. The witnesses never did establish indisputably who had participated in the firing squad or who had given the order to fire. Many agreed that the members of the squad were drunk. Even more testified that Scott was still alive after the first rifle volley, and had been finished off by a pistol shot to the head, probably fired by the Canadien, François Guilmette. The body was then put into a rough box. Ambroise Lépine subsequently overruled Riel and refused to give up the body for Christian burial. It was brought into the fort and presumably buried. At this point there was much disagreement and mystery. Several witnesses testified that noises and even words were subsequently heard from the box. One man who had been standing guard duty over the following weekend reported that he had admitted a cutter sleigh into the bastion after dark, and that it had then dashed out of the fort towards the river. In any event, when the buried box in the fort was opened after the arrival of Wolseley's troops, it was empty.

In retrospect, the defence appeared curiously weak. Why this should be the case is not entirely clear. We do know that Joseph Royal was not happy with Chapleau's arrival to lead the defence. We also know that Royal managed to sabotage the defence through his summation to the jury, which was supposed to be in English and merely preparatory to Chapleau's major effort. Instead, Royal spoke in English for four hours, running over the dinner recess and not ending until 9:30 in the evening. Royal did not address any of the contextual questions, but rehearsed the testimony in enormous detail to demonstrate the contradictions and discrepancies. Chapleau had to follow with another two and one half hours of oration in French, ending at midnight. Since Chapleau was most noted for his emotional appeals to juries, this sequence of events may have hampered his effectiveness. His oratory must have fallen flat on the ears of exhausted jurors.

Certainly Chapleau's strategy both throughout the trial and in his summation seems ineffectual. The defence spent far more time over discrepancies in the testimony and the absence of the body than one might have expected, and while Chapleau devoted a fair bit of attention to the argument that Lépine was acting on behalf of a legitimate government, he did not present much testimony and evidence – or many

witnesses – on the point. Indeed, Chapleau did not call many witnesses for the defence. Perhaps many individuals he might have questioned felt too implicated in the "crime" being tried to risk a court appearance. Chapleau did not, perhaps could not, really demonstrate that the delegates in 1870 had been officially recognized and had been promised a full amnesty. Both Bishop Taché and Father Ritchot, who were called as witnesses – Taché making a dramatic appearance on a stretcher – were probably fully prepared to recite chapter and verse on the dealings they had conducted with Ottawa and how they had been misled by cunning Canadians. They had certainly done so in their appearance before a Select Committee of Parliament earlier in the year. Chapleau did not bring out much of this dirty linen. In fairness to Chapleau, the Chief Justice made quite clear that he would accept no evidence of unrecorded conversations or hearsay evidence, but only documents, orders in council, or acts of parliament. At the same time, the judge allowed John Bruce to introduce all sorts of hearsay testimony about earlier threats against Scott and the disposition of the body. Chapleau objected to this testimony, but was over-ruled. In any event, Chapleau did ask Ritchot whether he had anything in writing on the amnesty agreement with Canada, and dropped the line of questioning when Ritchot said he did not. At one point he addressed the court to argue that the prisoner should have been tried for high treason rather than for murder, but it is likely that few of the jurors really understood the distinction or the reasons for it. This line of argument does not appear to have been seriously pursued.

Perhaps more to the point, Chapleau apparently did not himself understand the important distinction between a legitimate government and a *de facto* one, nor did he bring out this point very well. He did not ask the witnesses – both his own and the prosecution's – whether they thought the Provisional Government was the government in power and whether they willingly obeyed it, whatever might have been its legal standing. Perhaps the limited spectrum of witnesses told against him here. The whole point of the concept of *de facto* is that it does not require any implication of legitimacy. Chapleau's strongest argument, that Lépine was acting on behalf of a *de facto* government that he and his compatriots thought – however erroneously – was legitimate, was never properly made. Nor did Chapleau stress the political nature of the case. In his biography of Louis Riel, George Stanley speculates that Chapleau's limited command of English may have told against him.

In his prosecution's summation, Francis Cornish began by dismissing the defence's contextual argument, which he interpreted as being that the killing of Scott "was the act of a regular government, duly empowered and acting under the constitutional authorities of the country." Deliberately obfuscating the issue, in his next sentence Cornish asked, "When did that government become *de facto* and who gave it that authority?" He went on to assert that the government "was only a government of physical power and that this was used to enforce its will." There was, of course, no reason why a government of purely physical power should not be a *de facto* government. Cornish had managed to sneak legitimacy into his definition.

Louis Riel at the time of the Lépine trial.

Cornish disposed quickly of defence arguments that the absence of a body left the question of whether Scott was actually dead in a reasonable doubt. He maintained that "It is a principle of British law that all persons who participate in the taking away of life deliberately and without authority are guilty of wilful murder." He compared the opportunities for defence afforded Lépine with those denied to "poor Scott" and made much of Lépine's refusal to give up the body for burial. "To refuse the clay of poor Scott the last rites of the Christian Church was an act which must impress upon your minds the character of the prisoner at the bar." The evidence of Father Ritchot merely proved, said Cornish, "that there were others behind the scenes, misguiding and misleading those whom they should have been teaching and instructing." Cornish concluded by insisting that while "the so-called Provisional Government was not legal, or lawful,"

this entire argument was merely a red herring. What really mattered were "the immediate facts of the murder of poor Scott."

For the reader re-examining the trial transcript more than a century later, the prosecution was well ahead on points before the Chief Justice's charge to the jury. Contemporaries regarded that charge as brilliant, and the assessment has been repeated over the years. It is correct, so long as we understand that the brilliance was in directing the jury to an inexorable guilty verdict, both by its interpretation of the law and its shaping of the events of 1860-70. At the outset of his charge, Wood insisted on the distinction between fact and law, repeating the old maxim that "the jury are responsible to the facts and the judge to the law." But he did not leave all "the facts" to the jury. Instead he himself confidently interpreted most of "the facts", a procedure that worked to the great disadvantage of Ambroise Lépine.

Wood spent much time going over the events of 1869-70 with the jury, emphasizing the arbitrary behaviour of the Métis. He concluded by stating "it is for you to say, of course, I mean for you to decide, it is for you to say from the evidence in the witness box whether or not the physical power guarded by certain leaders was under the circumstances a justifiable organization." From this it seemed that he would throw the *de facto* question to the jury. But Wood then began expressing doubts on the question of justification, observing "If only one of their acts was in accordance with British law and organization I fail to see it." He subsequently proceeded to rule the entire *de facto* argument out of court, insisting "that no organization can be set up as a justification for an act not sanctioned by British laws. Besides being a *de facto* Government it must be a Government *de jure* that has a legal basis." He continued, "the settlement of Red River or Rupert's Land was under the protection of the laws of Great Britain, and the constitution and the laws cannot tolerate any organization that has not its sanction and its authority, but any revolt or organization of that kind cannot be set up as a justification for the excuse [possibly a misprint for exercise] of sovereignty." Only the Queen in council could recognize the court that tried Scott.

Wood instructed the jury to look only at the fact of the killing. "I repeat, then, gentlemen, that all that has been [said], whatever opinion you may form in respect of that organization, whether you say it was a one man power or whether it was a definite Government or not, whatever you may call it, I repeat in so far as you or I am concerned, it can have no influence or weight in determining this question whatever." This instruction left the defence with little other than the "absence of body" argument, which was hardly very convincing. Only if the jury believed that Scott lived or that Lépine was not involved in his death could it return a not guilty verdict, said Mr. Justice Wood.

In theory the jury could have overcome the Chief Justice's categorical instructions. It might have taken other circumstances into account or decided that the evidence of Lépine's involvement in the execution of Scott involved too many contradictions of testimony. But the defence had not made a good job of explaining to the jury why it should ignore the judge's confident summary and instructions, and there was no opportunity to respond to the judge, who had the last word on the matter. The jury retired at 4:30 P.M. The defence was confident of at least a hung jury, and over-confidence was probably one of its biggest problems in arguing the case. Anticipating a lengthy deliberation, the defence counsel went out for dinner together, and were thus not present when the jury returned two and one-half hours later with a guilty verdict but with recommendation for mercy. Chapleau subsequently read a memorandum of legal objections to the judge's directions to the jury. They were overruled by Wood. A motion to set the verdict aside because the court had no jurisdiction in the case and because the jury had been erroneously empanelled was presented, presumably for appeal purposes, and then His Lordship pronounced sentence. He rejected the recommendation for mercy because, as he put it to Lépine, "You did not spare poor Scott." In approved nineteenth-century fashion, Wood left the spectators in the courtroom in tears. He did defer the execution long enough for the entire court proceedings to be transmitted to Ottawa and laid before the Governor-General-in-Council.

The defence proved more successful in the subsequent trials of André Nault and Elzéar Lagimodière, both of which resulted in hung juries. As for Ambroise Lépine, despite the assertions of the prosecution and the court that his trial had not been a political one, it was clear that he could not be executed. The decision of the Manitoba court was never appealed, however. Instead Lépine's sentence finally provoked Canadian action on the longstanding amnesty question. On 10 December 1874, Lord Dufferin, the Canadian Governor General, transmitted a large file to Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, requesting that the Imperial Government settle the embarrassing issues still outstanding from the events in Red River of 1869-70.

Dufferin rehearsed the Canadian government's

version of the amnesty, insisting that Taché and Ritchot had been told repeatedly that the Canadian government had no power to grant an amnesty and thus no Canadian official could promise one. The Governor General went on to discuss the various grounds on which the amnesty was claimed. He insisted that early proclamations of pardons were all conditional, and all had predated Scott's execution. He denied any authorizations to Bishop Taché in early 1870. As far as promises made in connection with the negotiation between Ottawa and the delegates, Dufferin saw only "a direct conflict of assertion." He hypothesized that Father Ritchot had not understood English sufficiently well. As for Cartier, whatever he said was because of his "naturally sanguine temperament," which led him to believe that he could eventually obtain immunity for those involved. But in any case, Cartier's "casual conversations and private letters" could not possibly bind the government. So far so good.

Turning to arguments closer to the Lépine situation, Dufferin approvingly quoted the Lépine court decision that had maintained "it is not possible for any lawful executive authority to spring into existence within Her Majesty's Dominions, unless it emanate from Herself." Furthermore, the killing of Scott was "not an exercise of jurisdiction known to any form of law." Dufferin personally had the most problem with the final argument for amnesty that he discussed: the acts and declarations of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba at the time of the Fenian crisis. To what extent was the Crown committed by its lieutenant, he asked, especially since he was never disavowed or repudiated by anyone in authority? Riel and Lépine had behaved as patriots in 1871. He was prepared to commute Lépine's sentence under his own responsibility, he concluded.

Less than a month later, Lord Carnarvon replied. He agreed the question of the amnesty required immediate disposition, and approved of a course of action by Dufferin apart from his ministers. He also agreed with Dufferin's analysis of the arguments about the amnesty. Bishop Taché should have understood that the Crown could not delegate to him an unlimited power to pardon. The idea that there was a *de facto* government independent of Her Majesty was "unworthy of discussion." Carnarvon admitted the 1871 service by the offenders was considerable. The question was not one of amnesty, he argued, but the extent of the just and reasonable punishment given subsequent good service to the Crown. Lépine's sentence should be commuted, but it should be made clear that his offence was considerable. Riel must be treated the same way. Any liberation of these men after sentence should be predicated on a "total exclusion from any participation in political or military life."

LOYALTY IN A QUANDARY; OR THE "LEPINE CASE" MADE PLAIN.

"Now, I'd like to know just how to give the fellow a pummeling without damaging the figurehead," says John A., while Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie hides behind "the royal prerogative". Cartoon from "Grip", 1875.

On 20 January 1875, Lord Dufferin cabled Lord Carnarvon that he had commuted Ambroise Lépine's sentence to two years imprisonment and forfeiture of his political rights. On 11 February 1875, the Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie finally dealt with the issue legislatively, introducing a motion granting a full amnesty to all involved in the Red River uprising, except Louis Riel, Ambroise Lépine, and William O'Donoghue. For Riel and Lépine, the amnesty would apply only after a period of banishment for five years from Her Majesty's Dominions. This motion was approved in a straight party vote a day later. As a final resolution for the entire Red River affair, it was hardly satisfactory. But it did close the books on the Scott affair by granting full pardons to many inhabitants of Manitoba who might still have been prosecuted for their involvement in his "murder". ◆

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In the Footsteps of the Workers

Canadian Labour History Walking Tours

By Peter Steven

Over the last 50 years Canada's working landscape has changed dramatically. Big cities have faced urban "renewal". Some towns have "mushroomed". Others have shrunk to mere ghosts of their former days. Indeed, the changes in many new suburbs, like Mississauga or Surrey, lurching overnight from farm to urban "utilador", defy our abilities to keep pace. These shifts have been especially hard on the work-places and neighbourhoods of Canada's working classes.

The site of an epic strike for shorter hours now holds a Burger King. An historic union hall now houses a video store. A classic example of a Maritime worker's salt-box style house has been moved to a museum out of town. A company mining-town no longer provides housing and the workers' dwellings have been bulldozed so that no trace remains. But with imagination and the testimony of those still living, old work-sites, old neighbourhoods, and dramatic history can be remembered and celebrated.

Canadians seem to love walking tours of all kinds. Many cities offer walks featuring architecture, gardens, theatre-districts, or famous battles. One sort of tour concentrates, naturally enough, on the mansions of the rich and famous, whose thoughts and possessions are well-documented. Another centres on the lives of hardy European pioneers. Often, these tours are led by skilled historians, who combine sophisticated knowledge with the knack for telling a story. This combination of fresh air, entertainment, and education, taken in during an afternoon stroll, can be exhilarating and give us time to think.

During the past 10 years labour historians and union members from across the country have seen the merits of this type of popular history, and jumped into the walking-tour business. Their aim is to make working-class history more accessible. And the creation of tours down historic streets and past industrial sites provides an ideal way to meet that goal. Organizers strive to educate walkers about those aspects of city life often left out in the better-known homes and gardens tours. They talk about the work-places, dwellings, and cultures of working people – also the strikes and hard-fought campaigns. And, for some tour guides, like Toronto labour activist Jeff Hart, this kind of history is much more exciting.

Unemployed workers march along Hastings Street, Vancouver, 1935.

"Working-class history was never complacent and boring, like up at Casa Loma," says Hart.

"Some people don't like to see people walking around free," says Charles Bulmer, a long-time resident of Hamilton's North End, reminiscing about life in that city before the Second World War. Charles and his friends remember diving off their rowboat and swimming in Hamilton Harbour, of all places, as late as 1946. But soon after, the navy yards, the new factories, and the pollution began to cut working people off from the bay. A huge area of land and water was now out-of-bounds.

Ice-harvesting on Hamilton Bay in the 1890s.

Bulmer's comments on Hamilton are contained in an audio-tape guide for an extensive tour of the city's North End. Walkers can also take in Downtown Hamilton and the East End, each documented by well-designed pamphlets and tapes. Produced by the Ontario Workers' Arts and Heritage Centre, these are the most ambitious labour tours yet produced in Canada. The tapes emphasize stories and personal memories, and thus provide colour and emotion difficult to convey in the booklets. They deal not only with work-places and dramatic strikes but with lives in diverse neighbourhoods such as the long-established Sicilian communities.

Another stop in Hamilton's North End tour preserves the memory of ice-harvesting on Hamilton Bay. Every winter hundreds of unemployed construction workers took to the ice. The conditions were dangerous, the work poorly paid. In the 1890s workers standing on the ice operated a factory-like machine capable of gobbling up 70 blocks of ice per minute. Pollution and new refrigeration technology in the 1920s put an end to this too.

Down in Vancouver's dock and rail yards, near the foot of Dunlevy Street, Joey Hartman, president of the Pacific Northwest Labour History Society, leads a group of walkers. As they stand together in a small group she tells the story of the 1935 On-to-Ottawa Trek. "It started right here when 900 relief workers hopped the freights at this section of track." Suddenly, an elderly man from the group, who is unknown to Hartman, pops up to add some details. He had been one of the 900 trekkers.

Vancouver's tour was organized in 1986 as an antidote to what labour activists saw as the corporate culture dominating Expo '86. "The great thing about our tour," says co-organizer Joey Hartman, "is the diverse groups that walk with us. Many have family connections and have heard stories from their relatives." Organizers of the tour don't shy, however, from the darker sides of labour history. At the site of fish plants in Longshore Park they talk about racism among longshoremen earlier in the century, racism that forced North Shore Indian bands to create their own union.

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 forms the basis for an extensive tour created in 1994 to mark the event's 75th anniversary. An innovative scheme worked out with the city's transit union offers a three-hour bus tour, complete with guides picked for their story-telling abilities. They recount, for example, the tale of the Vulcan Iron Works in the Point Douglas area, where non-union workers rolled and forged stock for the railways, and where a series of bitter disputes stretching back before the War, culminated in May 1919. "Our guides can put a human face on the events, using some drama and a little acting," says organizer Terry Kennedy. "We don't just turn people loose with a map. The tour covers a good deal of the city's history; we visit the homes of the workers and the power brokers" – from Selkirk Avenue in the "ethnic" North End to the secluded mansions of Crescentwood, across the Assiniboine River.

In Sudbury the "Mine Mill Heritage Tour of the Sudbury Region" takes a slightly different form. It was created, by necessity, as a driving tour. Here the story of company-built mining towns takes centre stage. An attractive, pocket-size booklet guides participants through downtown Sudbury, and nearby Copper Cliff, Coniston and Garson. The booklet suggests that "you may want to drive leisurely along the streets, considering the contrasts in condition and location of the housing of workers and their families." The class and ethnic divisions that characterized

Miners' march, Ontario, 1913.

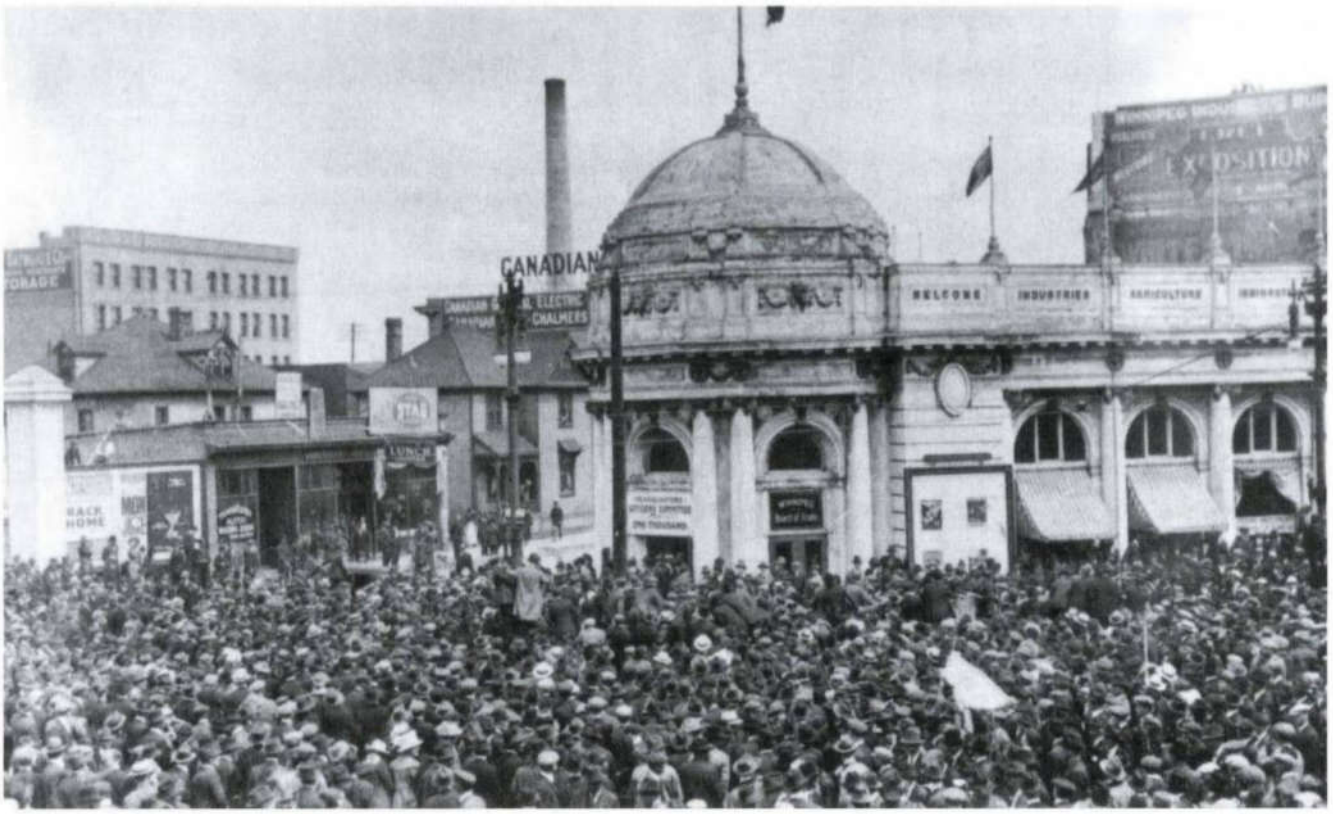
these company towns are strikingly visible in the neighbourhoods known as English Town, Italian Town, Polack Town and the like.

Mercedes Steedman, a creator of the project, says that in Coniston, the most rigorously planned of these communities, "First Avenue literally meant first class." Of course, the entire Sudbury area was affected. Mining produced "an environmental disaster," says Steedman. In some neighbourhoods "kids were crawling to school to escape the sulphur fumes on their streets."

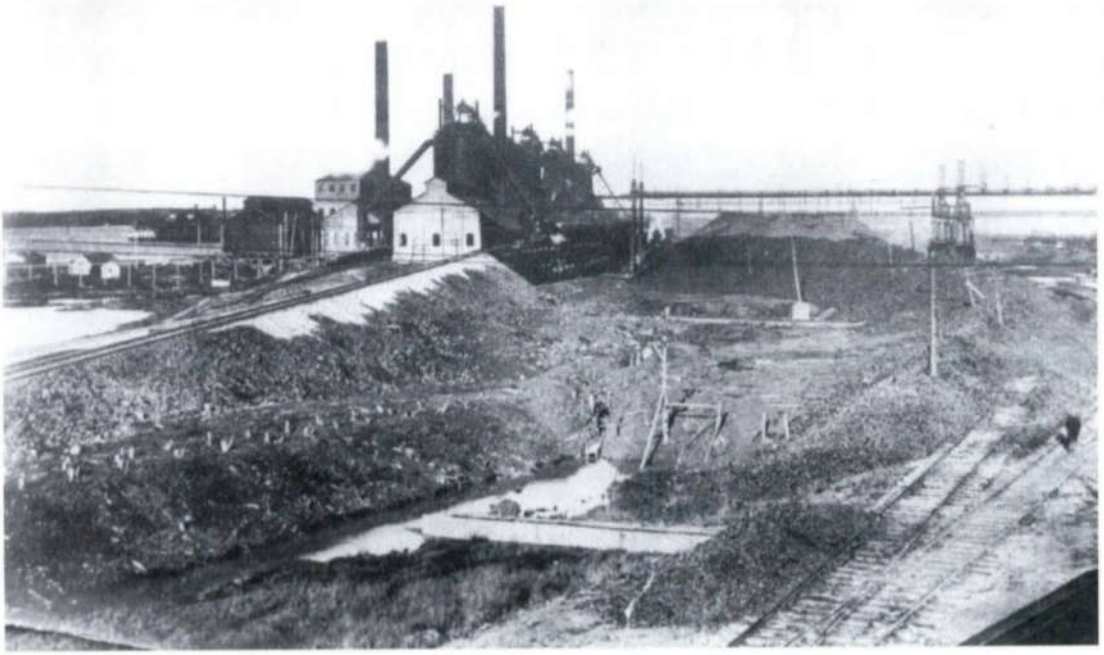
The legacy of Sudbury's Mine Mill union, Local 598, once the largest local in Canada, provides inspiration. Union halls became centres for theatre, concerts and the fine arts. A 1956 photo in the guidebook shows the great singer and activist Paul Robeson with union members inside their hall, standing before a large mural depicting miners.

Toronto's tour, which drew 60 participants in 1996, its first year, "celebrates 125 years of organized labour." It pulls walkers back through several layers of history, as it follows King Street out into the west end. First stop, near Bay and King, was the site of a huge 1872 support demonstration for the city's striking printers. Ten thousand people marched in that event. Further west, walkers learn about the Nine-Hour movement; a history of the Italian and Portuguese communities in the construction trades; the rise of public-sector unions; and the emergence of textile factories and unions around Spadina Avenue.

"I grew up with a lot of colourful working-class history," says Jeff Hart, "and it was never easy. Unfortunately, most of the old organizers are dead. It's a tragedy that we didn't value the history and we didn't bother to document it."



Crowds outside the Industrial Bureau, Main Street, Winnipeg, during the 1919 General Strike.



Blast furnace, Dominion Iron and Steel, Sydney, Nova Scotia, circa 1900.

In Sydney and New Waterford, Cape Breton, walking and driving tours make for a rather different experience. The grim labour history of the area means that many former work-places are, in fact, commemorative sites, based on dreadful disasters. A major explosion occurred in 1917, and the 1925 Sydney-area mine and steel strikes forced miners' families to the brink of starvation and rocked the province for years to come. In New Waterford, a walking trail of abandoned collieries is being created that will eventually lead to a cairn. It marks the site where in 1925 striking miner Bill Davis was killed. Another tour called "Working Class Ashby," led by Don MacGillivray, explores a neighbourhood adjacent to the old Sydney Steel Works. His tour is run under the umbrella of a city-wide community-health committee. "I make sure we go by the Tar Ponds," says MacGillivray. "It's one of the top ten polluted spots on the continent."

Back in Hamilton, Mary Breen, director of the Ontario Workers' Arts and Heritage Centre, prepares for their grand opening in the newly-restored Customs House (c. 1860). Breen insists on the current political value of these history projects. She wants the tours to influence development of the city. For example, prevailing schemes for rejuvenating downtown Hamilton now focus on reconstruction of an historic fountain. This is fine, she says, but the sites and events of the workers' city must be recognized too.

Why is all this activity happening now? Almost everyone involved points to the need to preserve the memory of labour activists from the thirties and forties. Some hope, simply, to point out that for most Canadians life in the past was spent neither in mansions nor pioneer villages. Workers endured bitter struggles and bad conditions, often especially hard on their children. Other tour guides, with feelings bordering on urgency, hope to remind Canadians about the ways that many of our rights were achieved. "When so much is being pulled out from under us," says Mary Breen, "people look to history for stability." ◆

Peter Steven is a freelance writer living in Toronto. He is the author of "Brink of Reality: New Documentary Film and Video in Canada" (Between the Lines Press, Toronto, 1993).

Taking the Tours:

In Vancouver call (604) 254-0703.

In Winnipeg call (204) 942-6532.

In Sudbury contact the Mine Mill-CAW union, Local 598.

In Toronto call (416) 537-6532.

In Hamilton call (905) 522-3003.

In Sydney/New Waterford call "ACT for a Healthy Sydney".

Mr. King and Lady Byng

By P.B. Waite

Lady Byng hated Mackenzie King with ill-concealed venom. She wrote R.B. Bennett in July 1935:

> *I don't suppose that fat horror King will give you any chance of a letup in worry — little beast. How I hate him for the way he treated Julian* [Lord Byng]. *He is the one person in the whole world to whom I would do whatever harm I could!! ... I loathe liars and traitors. He is both.*

The story behind Lady Evelyn Byng's hatred of King says much about her, her husband and even more about that opaque, convoluted, clever, manipulative, sensitive soul, Mackenzie King.

R.B. Bennett, Conservative Prime Minister of Canada (1930-1935), knew and liked Lady Byng and her husband; the friendship developed in the mid-1920s when Bennett was MP for Calgary and Lord Byng was Governor General, cemented after the Byngs returned to England in 1926. "Beloved R.B." was Lord Byng's salutation in a 1932 letter. The Byngs' love and respect for Bennett was partly owing to Bennett himself, but also for his private sympathy and support over the crisis of 1926, when the Byngs felt betrayed by the Prime Minister of that time, Mackenzie King.

Lady Evelyn Byng was half-Greek, and sometimes that showed. Her likes and dislikes were vivid, the colours strong. She had never found that hypocrisy came easily. She was born Evelyn Moreton in 1870 into a well-to-do English family, with maids, governesses and the appurtences usual to a South Audley Street, Mayfair, address. Her mother was born and raised within the Greek colony of Marseilles, and Evelyn was brought up speaking French with her mother and her mother's maid, English to her father, Sir Richard Moreton. In 1878 she came out to Canada with her parents, her father having been appointed Comptroller to Lord Lorne, Canadian Governor General 1878-1883, and her mother as Lady-in-Waiting to Lorne's wife, the Princess Louise. That October passage in the *Sarmatian* was rough; her mother hated Canada, its cold, its vulgarity, its lack of social graces, though the young eight-year-old Evelyn enjoyed Canada that winter of 1878-1879, and in many respects always would. The family returned to England the next year and in the 1890s Sir Richard Moreton was appointed Assistant Marshall of Ceremonies to Queen Victoria, an office he kept through Edward VII's reign (1901-1910) and into the years of George V.

Evelyn Moreton met Julian Byng in 1897 at a house party near Aldershot. They fell in love at first sight. He was an officer in the 10th Hussars, known for wit and charm; his fellow officers called him "old Bungo". He was not that old, 35 years of age, eight years older than Evelyn Moreton. She was puzzled by him at first, for he never seemed the same two days running. Worse still, in 1899 he went off to the Boer War without mentioning anything but friendship. Thus, Evelyn said, "the man I loved vanished into space in silence and I ate my heart out till he began to write." Late in 1901 he finally proposed by letter, and asked for a reply by cable. To that Evelyn replied, "Yes, please return immediately. Evelyn." Because the cable came from Aldershot, and was signed "Evelyn," the operators assumed it was from Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood. It reached Julian Byng, far out on the veldt, within 18 hours of dispatch! Thanks to his standing with Lord Kitchener, Byng got three months' leave. He and Evelyn Moreton were married 30 April 1902.

An odd bird was old Bungo. On honeymoon

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The formidable Lady Byng in her vice-regal finery.

Opposite page: Mackenzie King faces the voters.

in Paris, bored with sightseeing in the Madeleine, he asked a policeman, "How do we get to the morgue from here?" In those days it could be visited by anyone. They went. Evelyn Byng wondered how many husbands took their brides for a visit to the Paris morgue!

Byng's life had been all military and it showed. His career at Eton had been very undistinguished, and when in 1882 the Prince of Wales offered Byng's father, the Earl of Strafford, the opportunity of a commission for his youngest son in the 10th Hussars, the old Earl took it. Young Byng was soon in India and eventually in South Africa.

Shortly after they were married Evelyn Byng discovered a weakness in her husband's character of which she had hitherto no suspicion: "his guileless belief in the integrity of his fellow men." He never suspected others because he seemed incapable of treachery himself. His wife soon realized that one role she would have to play was as "secret Cerberus to his trustfulness." She would later write:

> He used to wrinkle his forehead like a puzzled puppy, as I always thought, and would look pained if my reactions to some individual under discussion were unfavourable; his blue eyes would take on quite a hurt expression at any disillusionment, whose existence he put down, at first, to feminine prejudice. After I had proved more than once the truth of such intuitions he began to say, "Well, perhaps there's something in that queer trick of yours..."

The Governor General and his chatelaine photographed formally in Ottawa in the 1920s.

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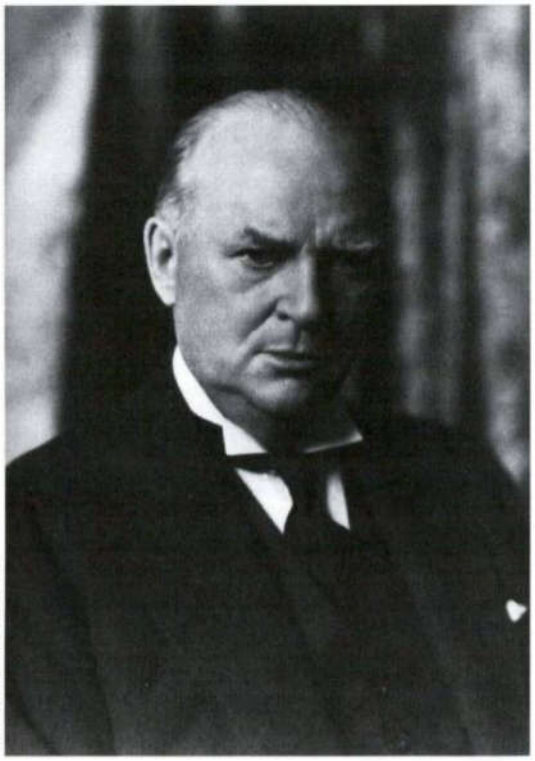
Knighted in 1915, Sir Julian Byng was appointed to command the Canadian Corps in May 1916, and took his Corps through the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917. After the war, he was selected by Canada to be Governor General in 1921, the first time Canadians had had any choice for such an august position. He and his wife embarked on the CP liner, *Empress of France*, in July 1921, and came ashore in Quebec on a grilling day in full Canadian summer. Both the arrival and the quiet passage over were in marked contrast, in Evelyn Byng's memory, to her October 1878 crossing in the *Sarmatian*. Lord Byng was a good choice as Governor General for he was idolized in Canada, and would be as long as there were Canadian war veterans to remember him.

The general election of December 1921 was a Conservative disaster. The Borden/Meighen government had won the election of 1917 only by rather crude electoral tricks justified at the time by the war. But the war ended in 1918, and Liberals returned to Laurier's banner. After Laurier's death in February 1919, a Liberal convention was held in Ottawa in August, and the Liberal party's new leader was a young, and very young-looking, Mackenzie King, 44 years of age. In the 1921 election the Liberals won 41% of the vote, the Conservatives just 30%; the contrast in seats was even more striking: the Liberals took 116, the Conservatives only 50; 37 of the 50 were in Ontario, and the Conservatives took none in Quebec. Quebec had not forgotten that the Conservatives had brought in conscription in 1917.

There was also a maverick Western party, the Progressives, who took 64 seats, and who also had a substantial Ontario wing. They refused to form the official Opposition and that became the task of the ailing Conservatives. The new Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, the youngest in Canadian history, would be able to govern without much difficulty, and at least some of his policies appealed to the Progressives.



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"Beloved R.B.", a favourite of the Byngs.

Sir Julian Byng and the young Prime Minister got along well. Byng was anxious to please; if he believed it his duty to see that the Canadian government understood British government, he also tried to appreciate Canada's point of view. He was not politically experienced, but he knew his duty and believed he could follow it. He was refreshingly candid with his young Prime Minister and was determined to be a constitutional governor in the best and proper sense of the word.

On the other hand, Lady Evelyn Byng disliked King from the moment she first shook hands with him. She seems to have felt instinctively that there was something shifty in him. How she arrived at this judgment is impossible to know: perhaps it was his handshake, the way he looked at her, his slightly fawning manner. Perhaps if she had known the word "smarmy", she might have used it, for it sums up her impression of him. Whatever it was, she distrusted him from the first.

King's was a rather stand-pat regime from 1921 to 1925, and his first term in office did not go all that well. There were Liberal losses in some provincial elections and in some federal by-elections. King's own performance in Parliament was something less than breathtaking. But in 1924 he had the satisfaction, by tariff concessions to the Progressives, of splitting that party; thus he could count on some further Progressive support. That was the way it was when he headed into the election of 19 October 1925.

The election was a Liberal defeat. King and eight other cabinet ministers lost their seats; the Liberals won only 99, whereas the Conservatives took 116, a gain of 67 seats since the 1921 election. The Progressive party lost too, going from 64 seats to 24. Even so, even with all the Liberal and Progressive losses, the Conservatives did not have quite enough seats to have a majority government. They were a tantalizing seven short of it.

Still, if any party could have been said to have won the election of October 1925 it was the Conservatives. Mackenzie King had expected victory and was quite unprepared for the result. It was a terrible personal setback for him, this verdict on his first term as Prime Minister. To be defeated now, just as he was getting his political career nicely established, would all too probably mean the political wilderness before long, for the party had not been all that impressed with him. But King's self-esteem was a formidable engine; when it was threatened, as now it was, he could be singularly resourceful. Evasive and devious sometimes he was no doubt, but for the same reason he was also a remarkably clever tactician. Now he had only one object in mind: to stay in office and keep that odious Arthur Meighen and the Conservative party out of it. He regarded his present trials as a personal test, as "refining [him] in the furnace of affliction as it is meant, and seek to rise into a nobler and higher manhood through it all."

He began to think he need not resign; he wanted to safeguard, so he told his diary, "the party's interest ... as well as the people's interests, who in the main have decided against Meighen." This last was an astonishing piece of self-deception, given the election results; but then King was good at self-deception. In the end, with his cabinet concurring, King went to Sir Julian Byng and said that he would carry on as Prime Minister, that the House of Commons when it met in January 1926 would decide whether his government would be sustained.

The Governor General did not like that and said so. He felt that King ought to do the honourable thing: accept the fact that his government had been defeated and resign. King replied that to do so would give his opponent a better strategic position than himself for future contests; he was loathe to do that. No, King would remain as Prime Minister and let Parliament decide. This he was perfectly entitled to do, even if Sir Julian did not like it much. Politics to Byng seemed like a military engagement, two armies fighting to determine who should win, and in his mind there was no doubt who had. King seemed to him to be trying to fudge the result. That of course King was; what

made it possible was the third party, the Progressives, who basically preferred Liberals to Conservatives.

King thus assumed that he had a right to carry on as Prime Minister until or if he were defeated in the Commons. Sir Julian finally accepted that, but with an important caveat. That lay in what would happen afterward. Byng believed that King had accepted the principle that should he be unable to carry on in the House, the Governor

Eugene Forsey: Firm views on "King-Byng".

General would then call on the Conservative leader, Arthur Meighen, to form a government. Meighen had, after all, won 118 seats against King's 99. Surely that counted for something. But King came to believe that should he be defeated he had the right to ask for new elections. As early as 8 November he was leaning that way, confident that "dear Mother and Father & Bell & Max the whole family in Heaven are guiding and directing me."

Perhaps the Governor General did not know whom he was up against – not only King but King's relations in Heaven. Byng had gone to his wife jubilant, saying that King had given a solemn promise that if defeated in the House, or if he could no longer carry on for any reason, he would not ask for a dissolution. Lady Byng was sceptical of this and said so. "Bungo," she asked, "did you get Mackenzie King's promise in writing?" Sir Julian replied with some heat that he would not dream of doing such a thing. It was a gentlemen's agreement, he said; asking for it in writing would be tantamount to distrusting King's word. He called his wife "a suspicious old Greek".

The House of Commons met in January 1926 and it soon became apparent that King's government was being sustained by support from the Progressives. Each successive division seemed to reinforce King's self-esteem and justify his having refused to resign. All went well; even a noisome Customs scandal in Montreal that came to light in February 1926 King got sidetracked into a special committee of inquiry. The King government's budget in May was sustained by a majority of 13. King felt triumphant. "This really settles once and for all the question of the Government's right to carry on".

But nemesis lay in the wings. In mid-June the Special Committee on the Customs Department brought in its report. It was devastating. The support that King had enjoyed all that session from the Progressives melted rapidly. H.H. Stevens, of the Conservatives, launched a motion of censure against the government for its maladministration of Customs. Then the fight was on. For four days and four nights, the King government hung on by its teeth with bitterly-fought amendments and subamendments. On Friday, 25 June, it could not even adjourn the House; it managed that only at 5 A.M. on the Saturday morning. The motion to censure the government was still pending, to be resumed on the Monday.

King mulled it over, worried it, consulted and thought. He concluded that his only option was to get a dissolution of the House and go to new elections. Even if the government survived the censure motion, carrying on its work would be nearly impossible. So he went to Lord Byng and asked for a dissolution.

Lord Byng was polite but very firm. He reminded King of their October agreement: that if King were defeated in the House or forced otherwise to resign, the Governor General would call on Arthur Meighen to form a government. According to Evelyn Byng, King denied he had agreed to any such thing and insisted that he wanted a dissolution. He saw Byng again on the Sunday and the Monday and Byng still refused. King at once resigned, bitter and vengeful.

As for Meighen, he did not have to accept Byng's immediate invitation to form a government, but said he had no choice. "If Lord Byng was right in refusing dissolution to King, I was bound to undertake to form a Government as a matter of honour." Honour or not, the Meighen government did not survive for long. King's clever, not to say unscrupulous, tactics brought it down early on 2 July 1926, by one vote.

The whole question now went to the arbitrament of the polls. King made the issue the wickedness of British Lord Byng refusing the advice of his Canadian Prime Minister, over a

matter of Canadian politics. Meighen made the issue the Customs scandal. King was now on a full-fledged moral crusade, charged up with righteousness, "to battle as my forefathers [William Lyon Mackenzie especially] for the rights of the people." Arthur Meighen believed then, and later, that King was simply trying to escape a parliamentary censure, using Byng's refusal as the cover for it.

Nevertheless, in the general election of October 1926, King won; while it was not a majority government, with help from the Progressives he could and would carry it. The Liberal party were admiring: out of the nettle danger King had managed to pluck the flower, safety – and office. King and his government were sworn in 25 September 1926. Two days later the Prime Minister accompanied Lord Byng and his wife to the Ottawa train station on their way to England. It must have been a strange and strained drive. King believed that they were still on good terms; as Professor Neatby remarked, "it would have been too disturbing for him to have to admit that anybody could doubt his rectitude."

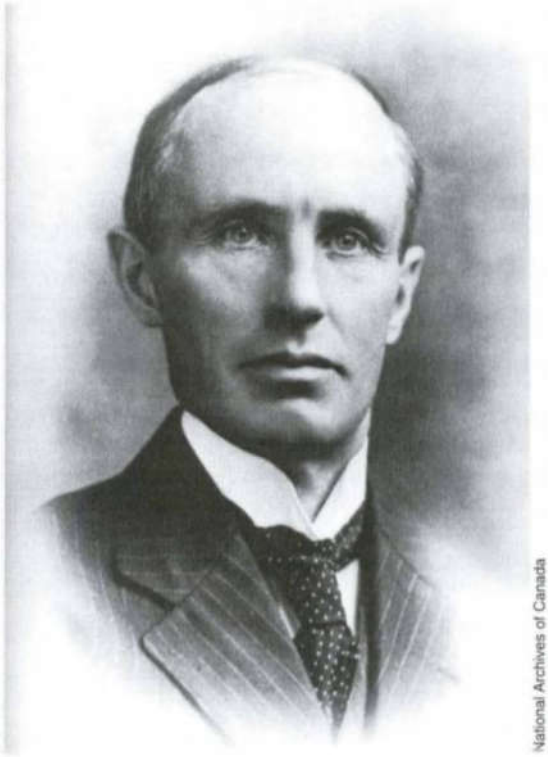
But both the Byngs did indeed so doubt, and a development in 1932 proved it. The Byngs were in California that winter of 1931-32, came north to Victoria and then east on the CPR in the private railway car of R.B. Bennett, now the Prime Minister. At every station, Evelyn Byng recalls, came crowds of war veterans, "Byng boys" they were called, to meet Lord and Lady Byng. The Byngs arrived at Ottawa on 11 May 1932, to be greeted by R.B. Bennett and a crowd of well-wishers. Bennett greeted Evelyn Byng with a kiss – the Ottawa papers had a time with that – and she and the Prime Minister walked down the platform arm in arm.

One person on the platform that day was left standing, pointedly ignored by the Byngs – Mackenzie King, now Leader of the Opposition. King was upset at this rebuff and shortly after called on Lord Byng, staying with Lord and Lady Bessborough at Rideau Hall. Byng had in fact been deeply wounded by what he felt was King's betrayal in 1926, although he now agreed to meet him. King at once raised the question of the events of 1925-6, and, "bursting into tears, he told Lord Byng that the whole affair was due to a misunderstanding." The attempt by King at exculpation so revolted Byng that Evelyn had never seen him so disgusted. Misunderstanding it had never been: ruthless politics it was.

Evelyn Byng had held her peace on that particular subject for most of the time since 1926. To say "I told you so" to her husband was too hard. She merely reflected upon Mme. Roland's remark, "*Plus je vois les hommes, j'admire les chiens.*" Lord Byng came to her after this 1932 interview with King and said bitterly, "Your judgment was right – mine was quite wrong."

Three years later, on 6 June 1935, Lord Byng died suddenly in England after an emergency operation. He and Evelyn had never had any children; there had been miscarriages in India when they were first married, and there were no children after that. During the Second World War Lady Byng's house at Thorpe-le-Soken in Essex was sequestered by the British government for war purposes, and she decided to come out to Canada, for she had always loved it. But the going was not easy; the British government closed down export of her British money, and she had to live on the charity of her friends, including R.B. Bennett. The allowance the British government finally authorized, £20 a month, did not go very far, living as she did with a female companion at the Roxborough in Ottawa. She spent her time on wartime charities and putting together her memoirs.

At the time of her husband's death in 1935 she had hoped to have John Buchan, a family friend, write her husband's biography. She gathered papers and scrapbooks to that end, then discov-



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Arthur Meighen: "a matter of honour."

ered that Buchan was going to Canada as Governor General. By a singular irony, the Canadian prime minister who recommended Buchan's appointment was her old friend who had embraced her so warmly at the Ottawa railway station in 1932, R.B. Bennett. So, by 1936 she was the only one who would have been able to give the story of her life and her husband's.

But support was coming. A brilliant McGill student, aged 20, had been in the House of Commons Visitors' Gallery all through the tumultuous debates that summer of 1926 and he had come away believing that Lord Byng and Arthur Meighen had been wholly in the right. The student was Eugene Forsey, then about to go to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. He eventually returned to the staff of the Political Science Department at McGill and began to interest himself in constitutional law and the C.C.F. By the late 1930s he also needed a Ph.D. and at his wife's suggestion turned to the King-Byng controversy. It had made him angry at the time and even more since. He approached Arthur Meighen in 1940 and at once struck up a friendship that lasted to Meighen's death in 1960. Probably at Meighen's suggestion, Forsey got in touch with Lady Byng. Forsey received his Ph.D., and with Meighen's strong recommendation his thesis was turned into a book, published in 1943, as *The Royal Power of Dissolution of Parliament in the British Commonwealth*. Despite its title, it was basically on the King-Byng crisis of 1926. As to its argument, Forsey said later in 1990, "I had not, even then [in 1926], the slightest doubt that Lord Byng's refusal of Mr. King's request for a dissolution of Parliament was completely constitutional, and indeed essential to the preservation of parliamentary government."

Probably encouraged by Meighen and by Forsey's book, Evelyn Byng re-drafted her own reminiscences, which had been mostly about her travels and early life. Now in the book published in 1945 they were a little more sharply political. King was very much alive and again Prime Minister (since 1935); while he was never mentioned by name, few who read her book could have had much doubt about whom she meant.

Thus, returning to England after the war, to her gardens and flowers at Thorpe-le-Soken, Lady Evelyn Byng, now an aged lady of 75 years, could console herself with the rugged support of Eugene Forsey's book, her intuition well vindicated. ◆

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The vice-regal couple with their entourage, Rideau Hall.

Canada's Black Defenders

Former slaves answered the call to arms

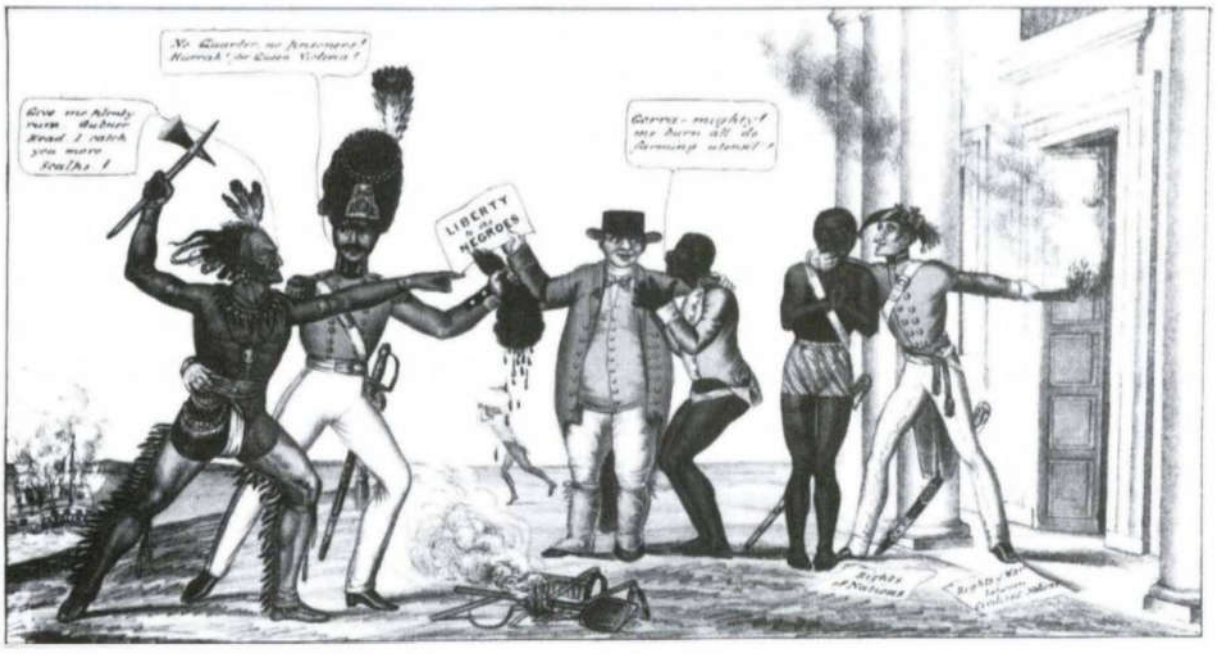
By Wayne Edward Kelly

The Coloured Corps was raised during the Rebellion of Upper Canada in 1837 and remained on duty until it was disbanded in 1850. It was a segregated company led by white officers and composed largely of escaped slaves from the United States.

Companies of the Coloured Corps were garrisoned near the American border at Chatham and Niagara. They maintained civil order during the construction of the Welland Canal, responded to American incursions, and prevented desertion from the British Army. Furthermore, the Corps provided an institutional framework within which black militiamen could express their ethnicity, assist escaped slaves, and struggle to improve the conditions of life for black Canadians. In their efforts to do so, however, the soldiers of the Coloured Corps were sometimes required to choose between their duties as militiamen and their moral obligations to the black community.

Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, escaped slaves and free blacks fleeing racism came to Upper Canada where black servitude had been largely abolished by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793. Many had served as soldiers in the British Army during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. The black community held a strong loyalty towards Britain and a fervent dislike for the United States. This led many blacks to take up arms in defence of Canada in December 1837.

The Upper Province was in a state of insurrection after radical reformers, led by William Lyon



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BRITISH WARFARE IN 1812, 1837-38.

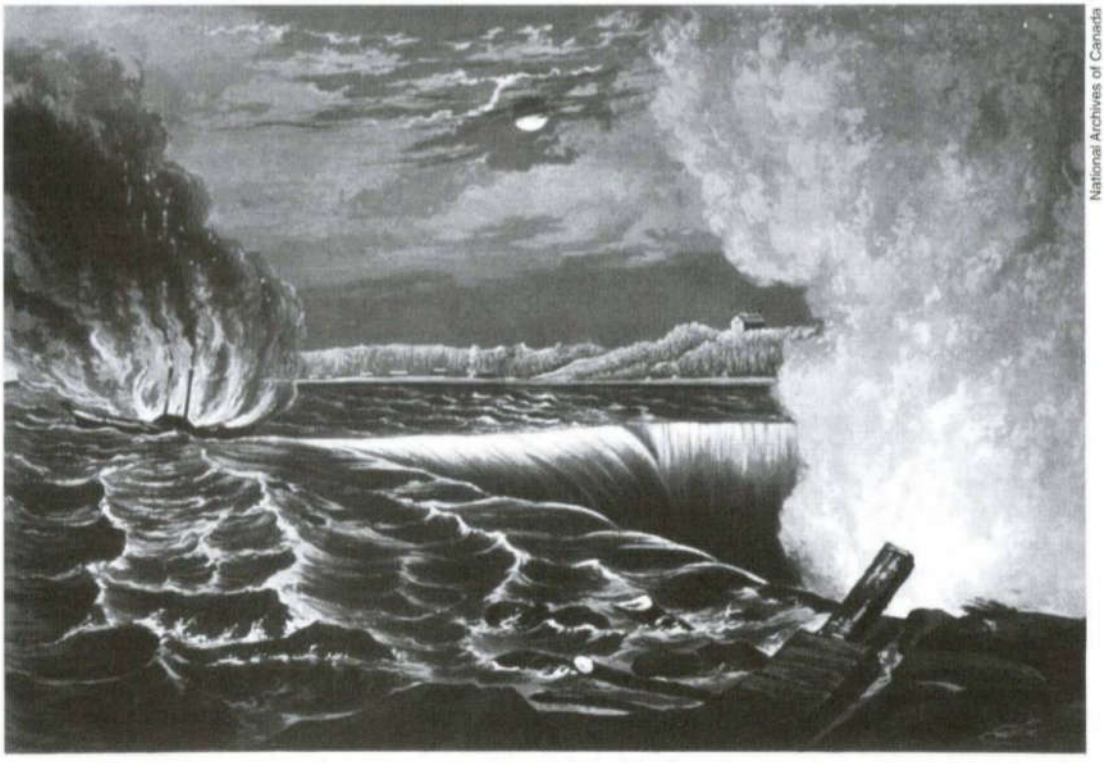
"British warfare in 1812, 1837-38", a critical American view by Henry R. Robinson of New York.

Josiah Henson: a debt repaid.

Mackenzie and aided by American sympathizers, attempted to topple the colonial government at Toronto. Throughout the province black communities raised independent companies of militia. Josiah Henson, a black minister who raised and led a Coloured Company at Sandwich, wrote: "the coloured men were willing to help defend the government that had given them a home when they had fled from slavery". The rebellion presented a serious threat to black Canadians. Many thought that a successful insurrection might be followed by American annexation and a worsening of their already precarious position. Determined to prevent annexation, resist slavery, and make war against the United States if necessary, they enlisted in the Coloured Corps.

The Coloured Corps was retained on permanent service at Niagara because of persistent fears of American incursion. The ease with which British soldiers could desert to the United States made it unfeasible for them to be garrisoned along the border. But the "Coloured Companies", wrote the Lieutenant Governor of the province, Sir George Arthur, "seem very useful men & will be highly serviceable on the Frontier to prevent desertion." Its soldiers were unlikely to return to the United States, were thought to be immune to malarial diseases prevalent in the frontier garrisons, and excited American fears of servile revolt. "The Yankees", Captain A. MacDonald commanding the Coloured Volunteers at Fort Malden wrote, "dread the Blacks much more than they do the Whites."

The Coloured Corps also provided an institution through which many blacks could actively



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The "Caroline" burns at the brink of Niagara Falls, an incident in the 1837 Rebellion in which blacks participated.

THE DESTRUCTION OF The Caroline, STEAMBOAT, BY FIRE

participate in the war against slavery. Many of its soldiers had been recruited at St. Catharines by a white officer named Captain James H. Sears, who had been given the command of a Coloured Company and "charge by authority of the Magistrates" of a number of men being detained at the Niagara Gaol. They had been arrested in September 1837 at a riot in which they assisted in preventing the extradition of Solomon Molesby (Mosely), an escaped slave accused of horse theft. After having volunteered for militia service, it appears, they were released to Captain Sears' command and participated in several actions, including the destruction of the American steamer, the *Caroline*, and the liberation of Navy Island in the Niagara River.

Like Molesby, many slaves had escaped servitude by fleeing north. Resistance to slavery was, however, expressed in many different ways. Enslaved blacks often held demonstrations, work stoppages, feigned illness or ignorance, and even committed physical violence, and, on occasion, slave revolt. The Canadian black community also struggled against slavery and racism by petitioning the colonial government, by providing aid and comfort to escaped slaves, and by voluntarily serving in the Canadian militia.

Although the Canadian militia did not make open war against the United States, in several instances individual soldiers of the Coloured Corps reacted to provocative acts by Americans and assisted escaped slaves. In August 1840 the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, Sir George Arthur, learned that "there has been an unpleasantry on the Niagara frontier." At Fort Erie, soldiers of the Coloured Company had fired one or two blank cartridges at Captain Palmer and several officers of the Washington Guards who were aboard the the American steamboats *Chesapeake* and *Cincinnati*. The American officers, it was alleged, had taunted the soldiers of the Coloured Company as they sailed past their barracks en route to Buffalo. The soldiers had responded with musketry.

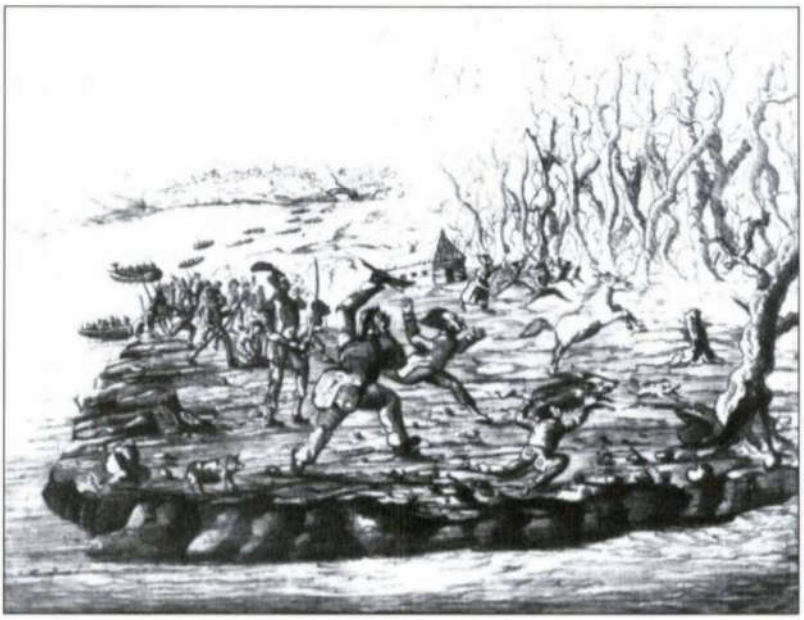
Although the commandant at Buffalo protested their action, Arthur was sympathetic to the black soldiers. "The Provocation", he wrote, "was extreme, as the Americans taunted them in a way that is peculiarly offensive to Men of Colour." Nevertheless, he demanded that an attempt be made to ascertain who was responsible for the shooting. Unfortunately results of his inquiry have not survived. The *St. Catharines Journal*, however, reported that two of the soldiers suspected of firing upon the steamer had "deserted and were re-taken near the Falls. One of them attempted to kill himself with a large knive [*sic*], rather than be carried back, and to suffer the punishment which he knew would be inflicted."

In September 1840, a more serious incident occurred between the soldiers of the Coloured Company and a party of travellers from the southern United States who had taken rooms at the Clifton Hotel in Chippawa to view Niagara Falls. The American party was accompanied by two female slaves. Transporting slaves in Upper Canada had been prohibited in 1793 and, after hearing of the arrival of the American slaves, soldiers of the company went to the inn determined to liberate them. The soldiers who, Arthur felt, "certainly were far too ready to answer to the call to their philanthropy" were met by a number of angry Chippawa residents that "had not shewn a kindly feeling towards the soldiers of the Coloured Company, but the reverse to a great extent." The soldiers persevered and a violent altercation ensued. According to accounts published in the *New York Albion* and the *Montreal Gazette*, between 40 and 50 soldiers of the Coloured Company "were in a state of mutiny". They besieged the inn determined to free the slaves even if they had to "wade knee deep in blood".

In Arthur's opinion this account was considerably exaggerated and most likely the "production of some Tool of Mr. Crysler, the Inn Keeper at Chippawa". After investigation, Arthur concluded that a few soldiers, who perhaps numbered 12 or 15, did attempt to speak with the slave women although it was as much out of curiosity as anything else. After they were confronted at the inn the matter was aggravated and despite a lieutenant's order to the contrary, a Sergeant Sims forced his way into the inn. There Sims met with the slaves and received assurances that it was their wish to remain in the service of the American travellers. This decision was passed by him from the window of the inn to the soldiers assembled below.

As this drama was being played out, Harmanus Crysler, the innkeeper, sent his son to request assistance from the police magistrate, Lieutenant-Colonel Swan. The magistrate, for his part, was reluctant to become involved in the matter as he did not perceive any threat of violence from the soldiers and was confident that the authority of the officers of the Coloured Company would be sufficient to restore order. Another request was made to Colonel Sparke of the 93rd Highlanders at Drummondville. He responded by sending a detachment of his troops under Captain Haliday to Chippawa. Upon arrival Haliday found things tranquil and reported that the Coloured Company had been "drawn up on their parade in perfect obedience to their officer some time before the arrival of the Highlanders." They were admonished by him for their conduct and Sergeant Sims as well as

The capture of Navy Island *in 1838 as low comedy, depicted by "Hogarth". The original caption reads "Extract from Col. McNab's dispatches to Gov. Head: At length finding we had silenced the canon of the enemy, our brave band, determining upon endeavouring to land, all hearts were nerved for the contest and our invincible corps stepped briskly into the boats, aided, however, by occasional pricks from the officers' swords. On approaching Navy Island a tremendous guttural noise was heard from an immense porker who, surrounded by her infant family, came fiercely bristling up to dispute our passage. Our men gave way, but on my representing to them the glory to be obtained by so valiant an achievement, they again rallied and succeeded in taking the entire force of the island prisoners, consisting of one old horse, a sow and two pigs, and an old woman."*



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another soldier were arrested and marched to Drummondville as prisoners.

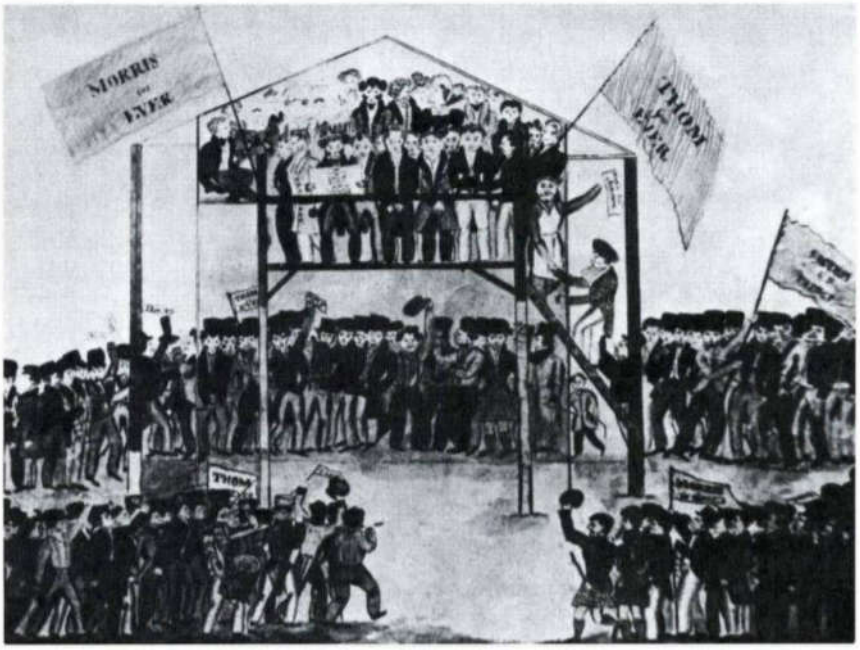
This, Captain Haliday wrote, "I regret much." Haliday knew and respected Sims who was, Haliday believed, "the best man of that class in the Province." He had been born in Jamaica and educated in the United States where he "for many years patiently endured a long series of acts of oppression on account of his Colour" before coming to Canada. At the beginning of the rebellion in 1837 he had enlisted in the Coloured Corps and since then his conduct had been exemplary. In 1838 he celebrated the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire by acting as marshall of the Emancipation Day parade at St. Catharines.

While his duties as a soldier must certainly have weighed heavily upon Sims, his moral obligation as an abolitionist was more compelling. It was cause for him to disregard a lawful order and to persevere in an attempt to free the American slaves. Although many officers were sympathetic to his case, a general court martial found him guilty of assault, a civil suit was laid against him, and he was demoted to the ranks. To avoid further disturbances, the Coloured detachment was subsequently removed from Chippawa and joined the remainder of the Coloured Corps then constructing the Cayuga road 40 miles to the interior of the province.

In 1842 soldiers from the Coloured Corps participated in a similar incident at Sandwich (now part of Windsor). An escaped slave named Nelson Hackett had been accused of rape and robbery while a slave in Arkansas and was being examined by civil magistrates. Although many suspected that the charges against Hackett were false, the government was determined to effect his extradition. While it is unclear precisely what happened, it seems that about 15 soldiers of the Coloured Corps, armed with bayonets, intervened and attempted to rescue him. Their efforts failed, and the soldiers were routed by the magistrates and some nearby civilians who later arrested a few of their number.

During each of these incidents soldiers of the Coloured Corps expressed a sincere and ardent wish to resist slavery. Their actions were considered responses to the contemporary reality of racism and black servitude. The soldiers, however, were "good and trusty" men who served in defence of the province during a period of international crisis. They participated in suppressing the Rebellion of 1837, maintained the security of the Canadian border and effectively reduced desertion from the British Army. And although the actions of a few black militiamen may have been criminal, they were also, in the circumstances, understandable. ◆

Wayne Edward Kelly is an interpreter at Fort York, a project of the Toronto Historical Board.



CANADA VOTES

Today the right to vote carries with it a right to vote in secret, but such has not always been the case. Canadians had the right to vote long before they had the right to do so without disclosing to others their choice among the candidates.

— J. Patrick Boyer, *Political Rights: The Legal Framework of Elections in Canada*

By Thelma Landon

How easy it is to forget the lengthy and arduous beginnings of democratic traditions. Consider the secret ballot, now a firm cornerstone of our elections. In the nineteenth century it was a radical and controversial proposition, staunchly opposed by opportunists and traditionalists alike. Reformers concentrated their efforts on more popular issues such as the franchise and voters' registers, but knew in their hearts that democratic elections demanded, first and foremost, a truly secret ballot. Without it, elections were becoming travesties, for the right to vote is a hollow ritual if it cannot be exercised without fear of physical or economic consequences.

In those days voting by a ballot of some kind was not much different from voting by voice or hand. Ballots, whether they were stones, balls, beans, or pieces of paper, always varied by some distinguishing feature such as colour or size or handwriting. From the days when ancient Greeks cast their black or white stones in judgment, to nineteenth-century voters depositing their different-coloured party ballots, secrecy was not part of the game. Voters knew their choices were public ones.

How does the secret ballot, also known as the "Australian ballot", differ from other systems? It has five essential characteristics and several variable ones. The essentials are:

- Uniform ballots, to be printed and distributed at public expense.
- Each ballot to include the names of all candidates who have been lawfully nominated for a position to be filled.
- Ballots to be distributed only by election officers at official polling places.
- Polling places to have compartments or some other arrangement to permit complete privacy for voting.

- A system to ensure that each person voting is eligible to vote; that the ballot deposited is the one he or she was issued; and that once the vote is cast no connection can be made between a ballot and a voter. (This is probably the most difficult requirement to fulfill; a counterfoil of some kind is the most frequent solution.)

Variables include:

- The nomination process, especially how many persons must sign the nominating petition that entitles the candidate to a place on the ballot.
- Arrangement of the candidates' names on the ballot, and whether or not their party affiliation is shown.
- Assistance for handicapped or illiterate persons that does not violate their right to secrecy.
- Provisions for (and restrictions on) party representatives at polling places.

In British North America some colonies continued the tradition of oral voting, each elector declaring his choice in open meeting to an official who recorded the votes. Others adopted a ballot system, the voter writing the name of his choice on a piece of paper and depositing it in a ballot box.

Given the sparse population, limited literacy, and restricted suffrage, secrecy was not a feature of either system.

As population and the economy grew, calls to expand the franchise demanded attention. The right to vote reached slowly but inexorably into the homes and shops of men who had scarcely dreamed of such a privilege a few years earlier. Other men, more experienced, saw irresistible opportunities for manipulating the vote to their own advantage. Soon a complex configuration of electoral fraud, bribery and intimidation emerged.

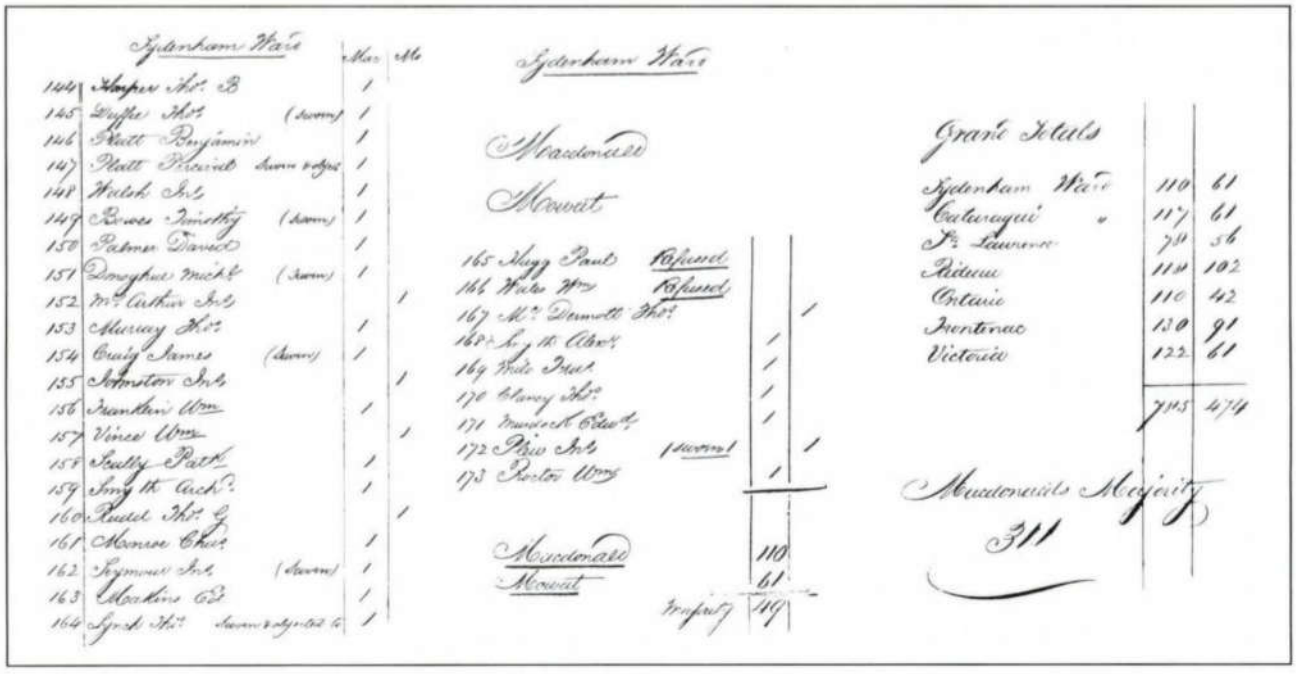
Nova Scotia got a head start because it had the first locally-elected colonial Assembly. In Kings County, for example, in 1793 the "sitting member" sold 100 acres to each of 29 men for £5 and his vote. Similar "understandings" regarding land continued well into the nineteenth century in many jurisdictions.

Fraudulent freeholds were another way to increase the number of voters pledged to a certain candidate. An extreme example of this practice occurred in 1850 in Saint John County, New Brunswick. Here a candidate gained 250 votes by dividing a swamp into 250 fraudulent freeholds after the election committee announced it would not question the nature or value of freeholds claimed by voters.

Quiet cemeteries and active imaginations produced voter turnouts much greater than the actual number of eligible voters in some urban areas. As *Le Journal de Quebec* reported on 12 January 1858, votes had been cast "in the names of the living and the dead of all nations". In this instance the fraud and perjury were so blatant that legislation to create an official voters' register followed quickly.

A popular form of bribery was the "hospitality suite", located in houses adjacent to polling places and offering free food and drink to the candidate's supporters. These started in a modest way but developed into lavish spreads, so costly that they became a financial deterrent

Macdonald versus Mowat: from the Kingston Poll Book, 1861.

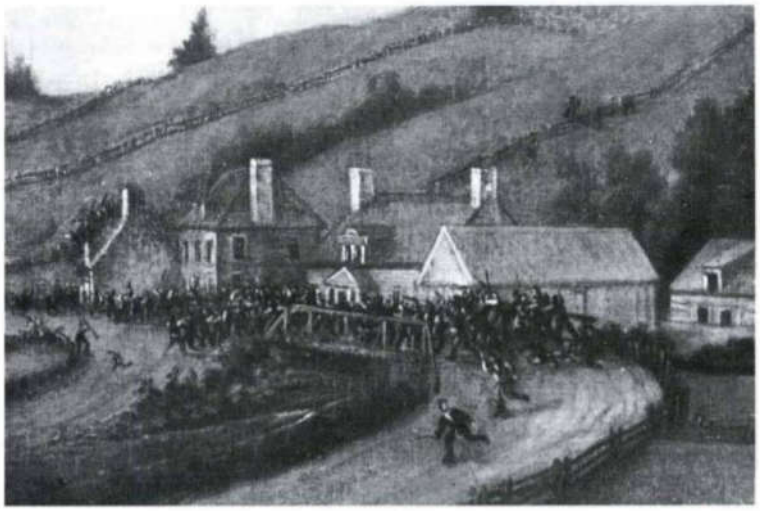


to all but the wealthiest candidates. This distorted the nomination process as well as the vote.

Quite a different welcome might be planned for persons expected to vote against a candidate. They often faced threats, fights, even riots outside a polling place, all aimed at preventing them from entering to cast their votes.

Economic intimidation was both insidious and pervasive. To a large extent it was self-inflicted. What man could risk voting openly against candidates favoured by his landlord, employer, major customer, supplier, even if no threats were made or contemplated?

In time, a growing population and diversifying economy prompted more changes. The number of elected positions increased and costs of standing for office soared; the era of independent candidates passed and political parties took centre stage. Some elements of electoral reform got a boost from this development: representation, franchise, voters' registers. But a secret ballot was not high on party reform lists; open voting was far easier to control.



Election-day disorders at Château-Richer, near Quebec. Detail from a painting by Joseph Légaré, 1849.

The Legislative Council of the State of Victoria, Australia, passed the world's first secret-ballot law in March 1856, and South Australia approved similar legislation just a month later. Their system was not perfect. Modifications were needed from time to time. But the conduct of elections improved so markedly that proponents of electoral reform everywhere were soon singing the praises of the Australian ballot and advocating its introduction in the other, older democracies.

Britain resisted for another 15 years, protesting that the "mother country" should lead, not follow, and had nothing to learn from her young and inexperienced colony. But corruption did not go away and Parliament finally followed Australia's example by passing the Ballot Act of 1872.

Canada's newest province, British Columbia, enacted the Dominion's first ballot legislation in February 1873, with the support of one of its most colourful and controversial premiers, Amor De Cosmos. Ontario and the Dominion Government followed in 1874, Quebec and Nova Scotia in 1875, then the other provinces and territories. By the time Alberta and Saskatchewan joined Confederation in 1905, the Australian ballot was a *fait accompli* – accepted as an integral part of elections. Only Prince Edward Island was dissatisfied with the change. After introducing the secret ballot in 1877, Islanders reinstated open voting in 1879 and did not adopt the secret ballot permanently until 1913.

Legislation provides the essential framework for democratic elections but cannot, by itself, eliminate all inequities. To be effective, laws must be reinforced by regulations and procedures and, most important, by the support of electors as well as politicians. A Nova Scotia election officer commented on the secret ballot's strengths and weaknesses in *The Nation* (Halifax), 10 January 1889:

> In Canada the Australian ballot system has been in force for the past fourteen years. ... In practice it is found that the small polling district and the secret voting do away with all temptation to rioting. In former times here, with open voting, ... we had furious fights about the booths. ... As to preventing bribery, it is not such a success as we should like. It has done a good deal; nevertheless, the most of our bribable electors ... make it a curious point of honor to vote the way they have been paid to.

Some things never change. Two millennia ago the Roman poet, Ovid, wrote, "Bribes, believe me, buy both gods and men."

In Canada the fight for electoral reform moved on to other election issues, especially the franchise, which was at last extended to all Canadians of voting age in 1960. Many details of voting have changed as new technologies come and go, but the guarantee of a secret vote is still as basic and meaningful as it was a century ago.

The Australian ballot, in its many manifestations, now helps to assure safe and secret elections for much of the world. Its principles have become so much a part of our elections that we tend to forget their relatively recent appearance and the injustices they helped us overcome. Bearing this in mind, we might ask: Are we sometimes too quick to criticize elections in emerging democracies, too accustomed to our own well-established rights and privileges to understand the challenges they face? ◆

Writer Thelma C. Landon lives at Lake Cowichan, B.C.

Laurier and the Issues that Divide Us

BY MICHAEL DAFOE

SIR WILFRID LAURIER AND THE ROMANCE OF CANADA
By Laurier L. LaPierre.
Stoddart Publishing,
Don Mills, Ontario, 1996.
514 pp., illus. $35.00.

With one referendum on Quebec separation just behind us and another threatened in the all-too-foreseeable future, a new biography in English of Sir Wilfrid Laurier is both welcome and opportune. Laurier LaPierre's biography of the first French-Canadian prime minister follows the personal and public life of Laurier and the role played by his wife Zoe and his close friend Emilie Lavergne. He traces the career of probably the best loved leader in Canadian history through both struggle and success to Laurier's bitter conclusion at the end that a French-Canadian Catholic could never again be prime minister of the country.

Laurier had to overcome serious health problems that plagued him throughout his life and here his wife played a crucial role by providing personal stability at home and support in his public career. LaPierre at the beginning of the book says he is going to emphasize the personal side of their lives but inevitably the political career becomes the central feature of the study.

Laurier began his career trying successfully to disentangle political liberalism on the British model from the bitter fight within the Catholic Church over Catholic liberalism, and to lay the foundations for an effective Liberal party in Quebec. The history of Laurier's gradual assertion of authority within the party and his long career as prime minister (1895-1911) are effectively handled. It should be noted that it was the powerful influence of Edward Blake that propelled Laurier into the leadership of the party. The great crises of both periods – in particular the second Riel Rebellion and Riel's execution, and the bitterly long struggle over the Manitoba Schools question – are used to drive home Laurier's commitment to a national Canadian vision that respected provincial rights within the context of national responsibilities and objectives. In LaPierre's words: "Divisive matters could not be ignored, but they had to be resolved through compromise. This conciliatory approach was the basis of his national philosophy ... Laurier himself had to work around it and, in the process, he was always abandoned by one side or the other. Still, it remained a constant throughout his forty-five years in public life."

The Lauriers and friends out for a drive.

The central structural flaw in the book is the much briefer treatment LaPierre gives to the period following the Liberals' defeat in 1911 (ironically over the question of free trade and in Quebec by a new nationalist movement led by Henri Bourassa). Until the War came in 1914 the Liberal party was a reasonably cohesive force. Laurier had defined Liberal policy in relation to the British Empire by his approach to Canadian participation in the Boer War and by successfully resisting attempts to centralize imperial foreign, defence and trade policies. The 1914-18 War placed that unity in jeopardy and the reasons are instructive: Was it Canada's war or the Empire's war? Was a volunteer army sufficient or should conscription be used? By 1916 the cries for conscription were mounting and the Conservative government of Robert Borden seized the opportunity to rig the voting system, construct a Unionist government and call an election in 1917. Laurier and those Liberals who supported him opposed conscription as both ineffective and bitterly divisive, and on both counts they were right. Old English-speaking friends and colleagues broke with him over this issue. The conscription argument had also become intertwined with the furor over Regulation 17 concerning the limitation of the use of French by French-Canadians in Ontario schools. Although these crises

are dealt with, a much fuller treatment is needed. The problem is compounded in the even more perfunctory handling of the succession to the leadership in the last years of Laurier's life. The most persistent claimant was William Lyon Mackenzie King. Laurier never gave his blessing to King.

Throughout the work there are two stylistic habits that are rather unsettling. One is the use of the present tense in sections set in bold-face; the other is the use of conversations in direct quotations, often with cabinet colleagues or major supporters (including an exchange between Laurier and my grandfather, J.W. Dafoe). No sources are indicated anywhere in the text and the guide to further reading gives little help. No French-language sources are mentioned – is this in itself an indication of our national problem? LaPierre throughout the book uses the terms "Canadian" and "Canadien", which also seem to reflect more our problem than its solution.

In part the terms of the debate have changed (there are now few ardent patriots for the vanished British Empire) but the issues dividing us remain alive. It was the failure of the Charlottetown Accord that convinced LaPierre that a biography of Laurier was timely. Those who wonder about the diversity and divisions in Canada could do themselves a favour by reading LaPierre's study of the career of Laurier and the revealing history of his times.

Michael Dafoe recently retired from the staff of the University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

Into Battle with the Seaforths

BY GAVIN MURPHY

A NARRATIVE OF WAR
From the Beaches of Sicily to the Hitler Line with the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1943-1944
By Robert L. McDougall.
The Golden Dog Press,
Ottawa, Ontario, 1996.
204 pp., maps. $19.95.

This account of Seaforth Highlanders of Canada in action in Italy during the Second World War was over 35 years in the making. Robert L. McDougall, a retired professor from Ottawa's Carleton University and former Seaforths' officer wounded in Sicily, started *A Narrative of War* in 1960 and published it in 1996. In between he taught in Toronto and Ottawa and founded Carleton's Institute of Canadian Studies.

As the title indicates, this is a narrative featuring a mix of first-hand accounts and official reports. McDougall draws from soldiers' letters, diaries and interviews, as well as from official sources such as regimental records and intelligence summaries. Fighting is broken down by chapter and McDougall introduces each battle with a brief historical overview. Gaps in the narrative are neatly bridged with fictionalized "letters home" written by the author under several *noms de plume*. This unique and original format provides an overall balance and depth not often found in war books.

War may be hell, but thoughts of it are distant, at least for a few hours at Christmas. Wrote Seaforths' Regimental Chaplain Roy Durnford in his diary on 25 December 1943:

> So the tables filled and emptied and were filled again all day, and I saw many a tense face relax in the friendly warmth that grew up within the walls of the battle-scarred church. What a concert of noise it was! As the sense of relief took hold, the talk became louder, and shouted greetings and jokes were exchanged from one table to another.

The controversial, costly and ultimately successful efforts of the Seaforths in the Italian campaign to the Hitler Line in central Italy are examined by McDougall in minute detail. He says in the foreword that *A Narrative of War* is merely a small fragment of a much larger work on the regiment's history that he originally started and never finished.

There's the rub.

This campaign against the Germans, and to a lesser extent the Italians, is presented in isolation. The reader is told virtually nothing about the Seaforths' role prior to the invasion (spent mostly in England), nor after reaching the Hitler Line. Even a modest survey of the regiment's activities before and after this action would have helped to put its wartime contribution into proper historical context.

Several maps are provided to locate positions mentioned in the book. These are helpful, clear and easy to read. Surprisingly, there are no vintage photographs other than one uncredited picture on the cover. This is disappointing. *A Narrative of War* would have benefited from pictures of the men who wrote the letters and notes appearing in the book, along with a selection of wartime photographs available from numerous sources.

Given its narrow focus, this book will likely only be of interest to military historians. Outside this audience, it will probably have marginal appeal. The Seaforths' success on the field of battle in Italy did not spill over onto the pages of *A Narrative of War*.

Gavin Murphy is an Ottawa lawyer.

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CANADA'S NATIONAL HISTORY SOCIETY established an award in 1994 for distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. Canadian writer and popular author, Pierre Berton, was the first recipient. Mr. Berton agreed to having his name associated with the award in subsequent years.

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A Settlement In New Scotland

BY SHIRLEE ANNE SMITH

SCOTLAND FAREWELL
The People of the "Hector"
By Donald MacKay.
Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., Toronto, 1996. First Published in 1980. 236 pp., illus. $14.95.

This book is divided into two parts. Part one, "After Culloden" takes us through the hunger, beheadings, high rents, and the suppression of the kilt; the second part, "Nova Scotia", tells the story of the Scots in Pictou County, especially those who arrived on the *Hector* in 1773.

While the first part of the book is high drama the second part, owing to the dearth of information on the early settlers, is somewhat more circumscribed. It now appears virtually certain that no new information will be found for this early period as the archives in Scotland and Canada have been well searched.

The author has relied heavily on the two main sources available for the early history of the settlement, written by the Reverend George Patterson, grandson of one of the early settlers: *Memoirs of the Rev. James MacGregor, D.D.*, 1859, and *A History of the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia*, 1877. The author covers the highlights from this early period in an easy-to-read style. One delights in the brief descriptions of the two Micmac characters, Lulan and Patlass, who were champion draughts players, and who so generously assisted the settlers. Local historians will be interested in the brief references to the outlying settlements including New Glasgow, Stellarton, Green Hill and Caribou where the descendants of these early settlers still live.

The American Revolution was an uneasy period as the settlers from the Colonies, who had arrived in 1767, supported the Revolution, while the Highlanders remained loyal to the Crown. When one thinks about Culloden and the events following, this is unexpected. The author gives no reason for this loyalty but hints that the Highlanders may have had enough of civil war.

When this history ends in the 1830s Pictou boasted 200 buildings, a population of 1,500, with the same number in the outlying settlements, and a thriving export trade in fish and lumber.

The Scots had planted well. The advanced farming techniques of the Lowlanders and the frugality and industry of the Highlanders were a winning combination. Except for the interlude of the American Revolution the settlement was a stable one underlined by a fierce attachment to the land, firm belief in the tenets of John Knox, and an unwavering priority for education. When Thomas McCulloch established Pictou Academy in 1816 (still in existence) it was the only seat of higher learning outside of King's College, Windsor. It was these qualities which helped to distill the Nova Scotian character, which is evident today in their attachment to their province and their strong belief in higher education.

The reader is well served by maps of Scotland and Nova Scotia. This reviewer wondered why Onslow, which is frequently mentioned in the text, was missing from the maps. One assumes that because it is adjacent to Truro the scale would not permit its addition. The decision to include the list of settlers from the *Hector*, first published in 1877, will greatly assist the genealogist.

Among the illustrations are three charming watercolours of Pictou and the County by J.E. Woolford dated 1817. These will appeal particularly to architectural historians as they show the two-storied, substantially-built houses in Pictou and a pleasing log house on the Middle River.

For those people interested in the history of the Scots and Nova Scotia this book is well worth its price.

Shirlee Anne Smith is the former Keeper of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Her family has lived in Pictou County for over 200 years.

Man of the North

BY CLARENCE TILLENIUS

COLD COMFORT
My Love Affair with the Arctic
By Graham W. Rowley.
McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1996.
255 pp., illus. $29.95.

When a young man born and raised in England dedicates his life to a love affair with the Arctic, what lit this flame must surely intrigue readers, as it does this reviewer. The lighted match was a short message handed to Graham Rowley, then an archaeology student at Cambridge: the wording was terse:

> My dear Rowley,
> This is to introduce Mr. Tom Manning with whom, I hope you will go to the Arctic.

The sender was Louis Clarke, eccentric and respected curator of the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Though Rowley did not then suspect it, that note determined the course of the rest of his life.

At Rowley's arrival in 1936, the least-known area of Canada was the west coast of Baffin Island, part of which was still unexplored. He went to the Arctic as archaeologist of a small British expedition to map and investigate this uncharted area.

Documenting an era fast passing from living memory, capturing the traditional way of life in the North, this was the last expedition in the Canadian North to depend on traditional techniques. Members of the expedition lived as the Inuit did and travelled by dog team over unexplored land experiencing the isolation, the extraordinary vicissitudes of travel in a sometimes savage environment and the generosity and kindness of the Inuit.

Apart from completing the map of Baffin Island's coastline and finding new islands, Rowley (*Makotenaq*, "the young man" to the Inuit) located and excavated the first pure Dorset site, near Igloolik, establishing the Dorset culture beyond doubt. The carvings and artifacts found there, several reproduced in this book, remain among the most beautiful that have been recovered.

Based on his own diary and the diaries of other members of the expedition, Rowley presents the perceptions of a young man faced with a completely alien, yet fascinating, environment and culture. *Cold Comfort* will appeal to a wide audience as well as being an invaluable source to those who specialize in the archaeology, anthropology, geography, and history of Northern Canada.

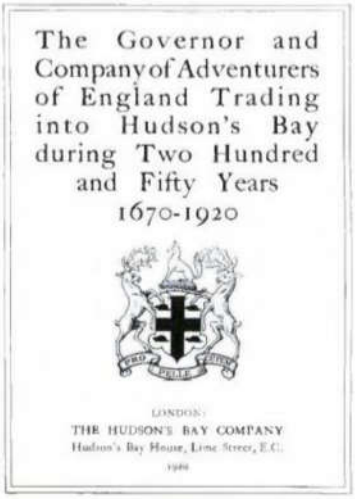
The quiet, almost matter-of-fact pace of narrative is deceivingly casual: momentous meetings, sudden crises are described in such a way one is hardly conscious at first of being witness to an event of far-reaching consequences.

Rowley's reminiscences of life among the Inuit are fascinating in the simplicity of the telling: Intimate details of daily life and the warm neighbourliness of the Inuit people, many of whom had hardly seen a Kabloona (white man) before; the tragic death of loved companion Reynold Bray, lost forever in the icy seas trying to reach Igloolik, an epic story so quietly told the drama only slowly strikes the reader.

It is difficult – indeed it is not possible – to give in a brief review the richness of detail in this reminiscence of a way of life forever past. Perhaps this brief quote will illuminate Rowley's cast of mind that governed his whole life in the Arctic: "Our host went to collect the walrus Kutjek had cached, but returned instead with two seals. Part of one was eaten raw and part was boiled. For some reason I was not given any. I suppose I should simply have helped myself. As there was no more fresh seal in the igloo, I started eating some of the very old rather green walrus. I was then offered a caribou tongue, a great delicacy, but I did not accept it in order to establish the principle that I ate the same food as they."

It was this reviewer's privilege to have met and exchanged thoughts and experiences with several of the old Arctic hands who were Rowley's companions and friends over the years in the North. I would urge that all who have a yearning to know what life was like amidst a warm and caring people in the harsh conditions of Arctic life should acquire and read this engrossing account of a way of life never to come again.

Clarence Tillenius is a Winnipeg artist and naturalist who has travelled extensively in the Arctic.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Where History meets Legend

BY DAVID ROZNIATOWSKI

AN ACRE OF TIME
The Enduring Value of Place
By Phil Jenkins.
Macfarlane Walter & Ross,
Toronto, Ontario, 1996.
256 pp., illus. $29.95.

CANOE LAKE, ALGONQUIN PARK: TOM THOMSON AND OTHER MYSTERIES
By S. Bernard Shaw.
General Store Publishing House,
Burnstown, Ontario, 1996.
152 pp., illus. $19.95.

In his 1762 didactic novel, *Émile, ou de l'Éducation*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau recommended that a child should begin the study of history by researching the history of the immediate vicinity in which he lived, and in another part of his treatise, Rousseau advocated that the child should assiduously study only one book during childhood – *Robinson Crusoe*.

Both points come to mind as one reads Phil Jenkins's *An Acre of Time*. In Robinson Crusoe fashion, Jenkins painstakingly measured out an acre of land in the Le Breton Flats in Ottawa, using a tree branch cut to a length of sixteen and a half feet (the unit of land measurement called a rod) to mark out an area of forty rods in length and four rods in width. He then proceeded to trace the history of this particular acre through both historical record and imaginative reconstruction of events from prehistoric times to the present.

The result is a constantly entertaining and whimsical excursion through regional history, albeit the whimsy bears with it an undercurrent of seriousness that deepens as the work progresses. There are conscious, if indirectly acknowledged, echoes of Thoreau and Emerson in Jenkins's presentation, in his declaration that "This pool of ground will be my Walden", and "On a whim, I walk to the acre's centre", or in the Thoreauesque aphorism, "Nature is organized like a neighbourhood. It is full of new arrivals and reluctant departures."

Jenkins has a particular flair for apt metaphors and analogies, as when he compares the appearance and disappearance of immense bodies of water during the prehistoric eras to a "rinse and dry cycle", or describes a garfish as "an eight foot member of the pike family with an oboe for a nose." Recreating the visits of Cartier and Champlain to his demarcated acre, Jenkins characterizes Champlain as a "terranaut", an ancestor of the Apollo moon shuttle astronauts, because of the proportionate magnitude of Champlain's mission, and the skills and knowledge that he needed to complete it. Purists may deplore this Bill Nye the Science Guy meets Where In Time Is Carmen Sandiego? approach, but the majority of readers will be pleasantly borne along on the current of Jenkins's enthusiasm.

Like all histories, the chronicle of Jenkins's acre (dare we call it Jenkins's 'ere?) is a story of change and vicissitude. Through the centuries the acre and adjoining territories received geographical names and became places of settlement and property, property that changed ownership and purpose from residential to commercial, and suffered destruction in the Ottawa fire of 1900.

Among the anecdotes of the later period of this strange, eventful history are several of the Dickensian-style Duke House Hotel, which in various guises and under various names lasted from 1818 to 1965. In the 1960s the area was expropriated by the federal government, and existing buildings were demolished for new development, which has not materialized to date, prompting Jenkins to express understandable and justifiable concern about the ultimate fate of this area, particularly in terms of environmental issues.

There are places whose very names conjure up associations of mystery, romance and legend – Tintagel, Delphi, Kyoto, to name but three. To add Ontario's Canoe Lake to the list may require a leap of imagination, not to mention faith, but S. Bernard Shaw obviously believes that the lake deserves inclusion among those parts of the world in which one feels both a sense of magic, and, in Shaw's own words, "a palpable sense of history."

Many stories of human interest have become part of Canoe Lake's history, including the ambitious and doomed enterprise of sawmill and factory owner David Gilmour, who hoped to transport logs through 445 kilometres of waterways, often on different levels, from the Algonquin highlands to Trenton by systems of conveyors, log

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slides, and jackladders. Gilmour's ambition extended even to the building of a settlement near his Canoe Lake Mills, a village which he named Mowat in honour of Oliver Mowat, the premier of Ontario and the most influential politician of the time, but the success of this project was equally short lived, and within a few years the village of Mowat was a ghost town.

It should be noted that *Canoe Lake*'s third chapter, which contains a major portion of the Gilmour saga, is the work of Canadian geographer and writer Gary Long, who is not credited as a contributor on the title page, but is acknowledged in other places in the book. Long's well-written account fits admirably into the story, so that the continuity of the historical narrative is assured.

Canoe Lake has had its share of celebrated visitors, including in 1909, English-born Archie Belaney, who had not yet achieved his notorious transformation into the bogus aboriginal, Grey Owl. A foolhardy bet on Belaney's part that he could cross Algonquin Park, carrying his rifle (a prohibited act) without being caught by a park ranger ended so disastrously that there might never have been a Grey Owl, had Belaney not been rescued by one of the rangers whom he was trying to avoid.

The most famous name associated with the park, however, is undoubtedly that of Tom Thomson, the artist whose tragic death has intrigued scholars and researchers for almost 80 years. Shaw is keenly aware of the dramatic potential of the Thomson story, and he meticulously sifts and weighs evidence concerning the often-repeated allegations of foul play. He has even assembled a list of "key members of the cast" who were present at Canoe Lake at the time of Thomson's death in July 1917. The result is rather like the dénouement of a classic English mystery in which Miss Marple or Lord Peter Wimsey presents a flawless exposition, leading to the unmasking of a usually least suspected culprit. Life, alas, does not imitate art. Shaw's case, although well argued, veers dangerously, here as elsewhere in his text, towards a dry, academic presentation in which vitality is sacrificed to the defence of a thesis. One is left wondering whether the conclusion was really worth the effort.

Art librarian and writer David Rozniatowski lives in Winnipeg.

Inside New France

BY KATHRYN A. YOUNG

BUSINESS AND RELIGION IN THE AGE OF NEW FRANCE, 1600-1760
Twenty-two Studies
By J.F. Bosher.
Canadian Scholars' Press, Toronto, Ontario, 1994.
530 pp. $41.95.

Business and Religion offers a rich contextual and biographical history of New France, an extensive historiography, and the ideas of a scholar whose work spans more than a quarter of a century. The 22 pieces – all but two were published elsewhere between 1967 and 1994 – offer the reader an in-depth understanding of the history of French Canada. One discovers in the footnotes proof of the author's sustained research in the French archives and his passion for minutia. He proclaims that "names and details bristle on the pages of this book, too many, perhaps, for some readers; but what is a generalization worth unless it is braced with facts and examples?"

The facts and examples which crowd these pages bid the reader to adopt "my growing conviction that religion and trade belong together in studies of business in the French empire." Canada presents a case study in this analysis of the force of religion, Huguenot and Catholic, on merchants' trade and kin relationships from La Rochelle and Bordeaux to Quebec and Montreal.

The imperial perspective evident in this history of New France finds its origins in the formation of the young John Bosher whose academic career was launched in the administrative and financial history of France. Bosher's early books *The Single Duty Project* (1964) and *French Finances 1770-1795* (1970) soon established his reputation as a scholar of note.

But during these years Canadian nationalism influenced university teaching and research so that Bosher was not alone in turning away from the history of Europe to a study of Canada. His knowledge of the French archives and his training in the history of the metropolis, however, had a profound influence on his interpretation of New France. For future researchers, he writes, "The foremost obstacle to progress in this field is the national patriotism and anti-imperialism that help to make us good citizens of our present sovereign state but bad historians of our past dependent colony."

The book is organized into three parts: government and society; the seventeenth century; and the eighteenth century. Chapters include: "Government and Private Interests in New France" (1967); "The Treasurers of the Navy and Colonies under Louis XV: Rochefort and La Rochelle" (1979); and "The Counter-Reformation in France, 1620-1660" (1994). Additionally, the author offers maps and tables, a note on sources, and genealogical charts.

In short, *Business and Religion* is an important book which brings to the student of the French empire a wealth of archival sources, biographical information and the perspective of a scholar recognized in the field. For the history buff, the book explores this period of early Canadian colonial history including the intrigues of Cardinal Richelieu, the *dévot* in the court of Louis XIV and the merchant trade of the North Atlantic.

Kathryn A. Young is an assistant professor of history at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

For Entertainment and Enlightenment

As a bookseller and book reviewer, I handle a great many books. Among them are some I want to read – histories of localities I've never seen, biographies of people I've barely heard of, chronicles of times I've never known. Even books which are very specific in scope or slender in size can attract my interest. Which ones? Those which present facts rather than folklore, which offer direct quotations instead of imagined dialogue. Those which give specific details and provide enough context to understand them. Especially those which show evidence of original research. Often I peruse the bibliography and source notes before I begin the book. I want to know how the author knows and why the author believes whatever is being presented. But I read much more for entertainment than for enlightenment, so I welcome any story worth telling, if it is reasonably well told.

One of the earliest artistic renditions of a piece of Toronto real estate is a watercolour of a log structure sitting high on a Don River bank. The artist, Elizabeth Simcoe, and her Lieutenant-Governor husband dubbed their picnic cottage "Castle Frank" and registered its land title in the name of their three-year-old son Francis. The "castle" eventually burned down, its name perpetuated today by a school and a subway stop. But whatever happened to the boy? His mother's letters, his own letters and diaries, and many Simcoe family papers were sifted by historian Mary Beacock Fryer. The result is *"Our Young Soldier": Lieutenant Francis Simcoe 6 June 1791- 6 April 1812.* A promising career as an army officer abruptly ended in a battle at Badajoz, Spain. The biography also provides some disturbing glimpses into the rigidity of military society and the terrors of the Napoleonic wars.

The Siege of Fort Cumberland, 1776 takes up a single episode in American and Canadian history. When the American Revolution erupted, there was disruption in Nova Scotia. As loyalists were escaping by coming north, many Nova Scotian republicans headed the other way. As the author of this study says, "the cross border flow of refugees during the revolution was in both directions." Some patriots who went south, grossly overestimating the degree of sympathy for the Yankee cause held by residents of Acadia, organized a military force and sailed into the Bay of Fundy. Their purpose was to "add another stripe to the American flag." The circumstances which led up to that invasion, the details of the siege of Fort Cumberland, and the consequences of its failure have been splendidly researched and are clearly related.

Methodist missionary James Evans was faced with a very particular problem as he worked with the aboriginal peoples of the Canadian Northwest. His religious faith was based on the written Word, but the Cree had no written language. Evans invented a syllabary alphabet (it is still in use today). Since York Factory had no publishing facilities, Evans managed to carve and mold type, create ink using soot and blood, devise a press mechanism, and then print psalms and scripture passages. He also managed to arouse the ire of the Hudson's Bay Company. Toronto writer and historian Roger Burford Mason has compiled Evans' extraordinary tale of trial and triumph into a slim book, *Travels in the Shining Island.* Fascinating!

Printing of a very different sort is summarized in a brief study of a Yukon newspaper. Thanks especially to Pierre Berton, we all know the drama of the Klondike gold rush, but a sidebar to the lead story is told in *The Klondike's "Dear Little Nugget".* The book is almost a scrapbook of newspaper clippings, each accompanied by enough explanation to make it understandable. The first issue was typewritten and tacked on a post-press, type and paper were delayed in transit over the White Pass. From that day until the paper's demise four years later, the *Nugget* was in the middle of everything in Dawson City, reporting the boom and the bust with vitality and irreverence. News of priests and of prostitutes, words of poets and of politicians, tales of holidays and of hangings – the *Nugget* found room in its columns for them all.

Earlier in the century, when gold was discovered on the mainland of British Columbia, the population grew from a few hundred to many thousands – most of them Americans. To stave off possible U.S. annexation, the British Colonial office, in 1859, created a new colony and quickly assembled the administrators and troops essential to ensure and enforce its new govern-

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ment. On 6 January 1860 from England arrived George Hills, the first Anglican Bishop. Church and state would work hand in hand to establish British authority over both new immigrants and native peoples. Four months later, Hills wrote in his diary "I have had more vexations and troubles than in all my ministerial life before." Diaries are often more interesting than memoirs – they capture immediate incidents and record responses unfiltered by reflection. Hills' complete diary for that first year, 1860, has just been published as *No Better Land.* It is a journal of his journeys, his encounters, his trials and his achievements. It testifies to his admirable aspirations and to his parochial attitudes.

Across the continent there was another gold rush. In the 1860s Americans were fighting to keep from coming apart and Canadians were contemplating getting together. In Renfrew, Nova Scotia, men were gathering gold not by panning streams for nuggets, but by crushing great quantities of quartz to extract thin layers of the precious metal. In five years, the output grew from 300 to more than 9,000 ounces. Up from almost nothing sprang a town complete with stores, stables, schools, saloons and a temperance hall. Quickly Renfrew grew, but slowly it declined. *Renfrew Gold* traces both the rapid development and eventual demise of a small community. When gold production diminished, the town lost its purpose. Some residents left to try to make greater fortunes in the West. Others remained in Renfrew to pursue fruitless new ventures for getting rich. Today there is nothing there at all, except the hopes of some to put it back on the map as a tourist attraction.

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The Klondike's "Dear Little Nugget." By Ian Macdonald and Betty O'Keefe. Horsdal & Schubart. 160 pp., illus. $12.95.

"Our Young Soldier": Lieutenant Francis Simcoe 6 June 1791 - 6 April 1812. By Mary Beacock Fryer. Dundurn Press. 188 pp., illus. $16.99.

No Better Land: The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills. Edited by Roberta L. Bagshaw. Sono Nis Press. 308 pp., illus. $19.95.

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Bad manners at the Vimy Ridge ceremonies

I was delighted to see a tribute to Lord Byng [December 1996/January 1997] which I hope in some small way makes up for the way he was slighted at the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge ceremonies in 1992.

My wife and I attended as part of a tour. In spite of the vast majority of Canadians at Vimy having been English-speaking, President Mitterrand spoke exclusively in French, and Prime Minister Mulroney, much too long, half in French.

But worst still, in spite of the fact that the commanding general of the operation, Byng, was a British officer, that a British brigade was introduced to "thicken up" the Fourth Division, and considerable artillery and other support units were British, the British contribution was not mentioned, and no British units were in the parade. Not quite on the scale of the Americans not inviting their allies, including the brave Poles who captured Monte Cassino and opened the road to Rome, to the subsequent victory parade, but bad enough. Surely Canada can do better.

I might mention that on our tour was a British veteran of the Cornwall Light Infantry who had fought at Vimy. On the importuning of our tour leader he was allowed into the enclosed area, but was not seated with the Canadian veterans who were introduced to the President and the Prime Minister. Not a very generous gesture to a soldier who was subsequently wounded at the foot of the Ridge.

Kenneth L. Morrison,
Thunder Bay, ON.

'The Loop'

I share David Rozniatowski's admiration for Brock Silversides' *Waiting for the Light* [Books in Review, December 1996/January 1997], but there is more to criticize than the spelling of Gaston Glass's name. A glaring error in geography is evident on page 55. The mountain pictured is Cathedral Crags viewed from the Lower Spiral Tunnel in the Kicking Horse Pass. The Loop was indeed in the Illecillewaet Valley but had nothing to do with the Spiral Tunnels. The error is repeated on page 75. Once again he merges the Loop and the Spiral Tunnels together. The Loop was a wooden trestle built for grade reduction on the western slope of Rogers Pass in the Selkirks. It was eliminated by the Connaught Tunnel completed in 1916. The Spiral Tunnels are in Cathedral and Ogden mountains which are located on the western side of the Kicking Horse Pass near Field, B.C. and were completed in 1909. The locations are approximately 60 miles apart.

I know of no other errors in Mr. Silversides' book and like Mr. Rozniatowski, I admire *Waiting for the Light* a lot.

Ian McDonald,
e-mail.

The Mackenzie scrap-books

A number of years ago a Toronto antiquarian book dealer listed (and thereafter sold) the following item: "*William Lyon Mackenzie's Mission to England in 1832-3*, as the Representative of THE REFORMERS OF UPPER CANADA To Urge on the British Government A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES in the Provinces, Vol. I. & Vol. II. [London, 1833?]."

It was described as "two leather-bound scrap-books of columns from English and Upper Canadian newspapers of 1832 and 1833, with headings, marginal notes, comments, and page numbers in Mackenzie's own hand ... With autograph letters, signed, to Mackenzie, for George Grote, renowned English historian, and R. S. Rintoul, editor of the London *Spectator* tipped into Volume One." If any reader of *The Beaver* knows the current whereabouts of these scrap-books, I would be grateful to hear from them.

Chris Raible,
190 Mill Street, Box 308,
Creemore, ON,
L0M 1G0.

Our first Christmas tree

Harry Chapman's story of "When the Christmas Tree First Came to Canada" [December 1996/January 1997] is wrong on at least one very important count: Halifax 1846 was not the first time!

The first decorated Christmas tree in Canada was erected in Sorel, Quebec, in 1781, by Major-General Friedrich-Adolphus von Riedesel. Riedesel was commander of the "Hessian troops" fighting the American Revolution and he had come to Canada with his wife and family. (One of his daughters was christened "Canada"). Among others, those present at the illumination of the first Christmas tree were: Prince Edward, the Duke of Richmond; Captain Charles Peel, the Count and the Countess of Dalhousie. The house still exists and, in 1966, the Germany-Canada Alliance unveiled a bronze plaque on which is engraved:

> In this house, a Christmas tree was lit by General von Riedesel on the 25th December 1781 in German tradition, which is recorded as the first Christmas tree in Canada."

André Pelchat,
Victoriaville, QC.

Student favourite

This is to let you know how much I thoroughly enjoy *The Beaver*. I have been receiving the magazine since high school and now, some five years down the road, find myself as an undergraduate student of history. It is wonderful to read articles on our great Canadian past, many of which go well beyond the mainstream of popular history.

I must add that the numerous letters you received on the name-change issue were both a source of entertainment and reassurance. In an era where we seem to be losing many institutions of historical value, it is a welcome event when so many leap to their pen and ink in protest.

Nancy Beattie,
North Hatley, QC.

Cabot kin

Thank you for the excellent article on John Cabot [October/November 1996]. It is rare that we see one that goes into as much detail on his life and times. Looking at the pictures of the *Matthew*, it is easy to imagine how his crew felt as they sailed off into uncharted seas.

Many years ago, my grandmother's brother (Sir Daniel Cabot), researched our family tree to establish our connection to John Cabot. As a result we are looking forward to the arrival of the *Matthew* off Newfoundland next year and hope to be there to witness the event.

Keith Beardsley,
Ottawa, ON.

Welcome levity

I write to commend the December 1996/January 1997 article "Tall Tales of the West" with its delightful illustrations. Now that's really Canadian! Enjoyable as your journal is, it can sometimes be deadly serious, and a little levity is appreciated. Do search for a few more.

L. Rodgers,
Winnipeg, MB.

The Beaver
JUNE / JULY 1997

PROTECTING THE WORKING GIRL

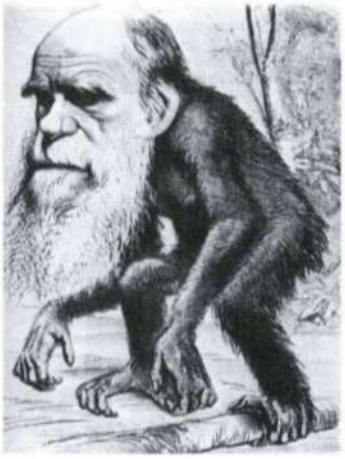
"Never in the world's history was such a glamour thrown around sin; never was vice presented in such a multitudinous variety of forms, or in so fair a guise; and never before were the emissaries of Satan so unwearied in their efforts to entrap unsuspecting victims."

— Toronto YWCA report, 1878.

Carolyn Strange takes us back to Victorian times and the efforts of "Toronto the Good" to protect its growing army of working girls from those terrible "urban perils".

THE DOCTOR AND THE BISHOP

Ramsay Cook chronicles Dr. Albert Laurendeau's battle with the Catholic Church over evolution and Darwinism, a dispute that reverberated through the years to Quebec's Quiet Revolution and beyond.



THE FATHER OF THE HARDY BOYS

Shane Peacock tells the remarkable story of the Canadian author who wrote the "immortal potboilers" adored by generations of North American boys.

THE FIGHTING EDITOR

Newspaperman J.E. Belliveau remembers a neglected hero of Canadian journalism, "Hawke of the *Transcript*".

THE GRAND BANKS

The celebrated naturalist and explorer Sir Joseph Banks sojourned in Newfoundland and Labrador in the 1760s — and he left a journal. Barry Baldwin tells the interesting story of a forgotten visit.

Plus... ***Christopher Moore*** *on history and those who make it and write about it,* ***Chris Raible*** *on books ... and our popular new feature,* ***"Pictures from Canadian Attics"****.*

Clarence Tillenius

An illusion of wilderness

The habitat diorama: is it art?

Some years ago, having been for a couple of decades engaged in the creation of museum dioramas, I was approached by an unusual young Albertan who confided she was embarked on a study of dioramas, their history and development, which she hoped would eventually lead to a comprehensive and detailed overview of the whole theory and impact of dioramas throughout the world. The young woman was Karen Wonders (now Dr. Wonders) and this was on the eve of her departure for Uppsala, Sweden, where for the next several years she would pursue her research under the aegis of Uppsala University's head of art history, my good friend Professor Allan Ellenius.

The investigative fields she had outlined on that early visit would include habitat dioramas, biological exhibits, natural history displays, taxidermic displays, environmental art, illusionistic art. Her richly illustrated monograph (with over 130 illustrations) is the farthest-ranging and most informative study I have yet encountered, having myself spent some 40 years in first the study and then the execution of dioramas on both sides of the Atlantic.

It gives ample proof how devotedly through travels and investigation she has developed the original goal, which was to explore the relationship between art and history using the specific example of habitat dioramas which are three-dimensional museum exhibits with mounted zoological specimens in a naturalistic foreground merging into a painted landscape background.

Her work is the first comprehensive documentation of the development of habitat dioramas, covering the period 1880 to 1950. A survey of museums adopting the diorama technique reveals that the diorama phenomenon was, by and large, restricted to two countries, Sweden and the United States. In Sweden, the main originator of illusionary nature-displays was Gustaf Kolthoff, founder of the so-called biological museums. His early collaborator was the artist Bruno Liljefors. These museums, and the series of biological dioramas created by Olof Gylling, were pedagogical in character rather than scientific. As pristine wilderness was vanishing under the onslaught of industrial progress, biological exhibitions of specific, regional habitats functioned as archives of cultural riches.

HABITAT DIORAMAS, ILLUSION OF WILDERNESS IN MUSEUMS OF NATURAL HISTORY

By Karen Wonders.
Department of Art History,
Uppsala University.
Distributor: Almqvist & Wiksell
International, Box 4627, S-116 91
Stockholm, Sweden.

In the United States a similar commitment to public education led to the founding of such diorama-rich institutions as the American Museum of Natural History. Among the earliest creators of illusionistic wildlife displays were William Hornaday, Frank Chapman, Carl Akeley and John Rowley. Dioramas were seen in the United States as a way to preserve the wilderness which had become an integral part of the national consciousness and which since the mid-nineteenth century had been in noticeable decline. Thus, as in Sweden, museums with habitat dioramas functioned as mausoleums of a vanishing heritage, erected in cities for the benefit of a public alienated from its natural past.

For this writer, after a life-long acquaintance with the great museums of art and the museums of natural history in North America and Europe, it is still an unending puzzle why museum habitat groups – dioramas – in natural history museums have almost invariably been ignored by critics and art historians, when it is clear to any intelligent observer that only an art most subtle and demanding could create great museum masterpieces such as the magnificent dioramas of the African Hall in the American Museum of Natural History which still – after almost 70 years – continue to draw their daily quota of thousands of admiring viewers.

Clarence Tillenius stands in his Rocky Mountain Goat diorama at the Provincial Museum, Edmonton, Alberta.

No less than 786 footnotes in addition to a select bibliography plus index might seem overwhelming, but in fact add much to the wealth of information Dr. Wonders' book provides. Of particular interest are the many photographs of noted diorama artists at work, not only in forest and field but also within the museum diorama shells, surrounded by their field sketches, diagrams, painting tools and paraphernalia.

Personally, it is sheer nostalgia to read the many biographies and see again the pictured faces of so many cherished artist friends long gone now to that great hunting ground in the beyond, and there must be thousands of dedicated museum-goers who will feel the same.

Certain it is that many readers of this book will make their way to whatever museum dioramas lie within their reach and come to their own conclusions: is it art? – or no? Wonders offers this: "The artistic validity of the diorama concept was recognized by the very founder of modern art, Marcel Duchamp."

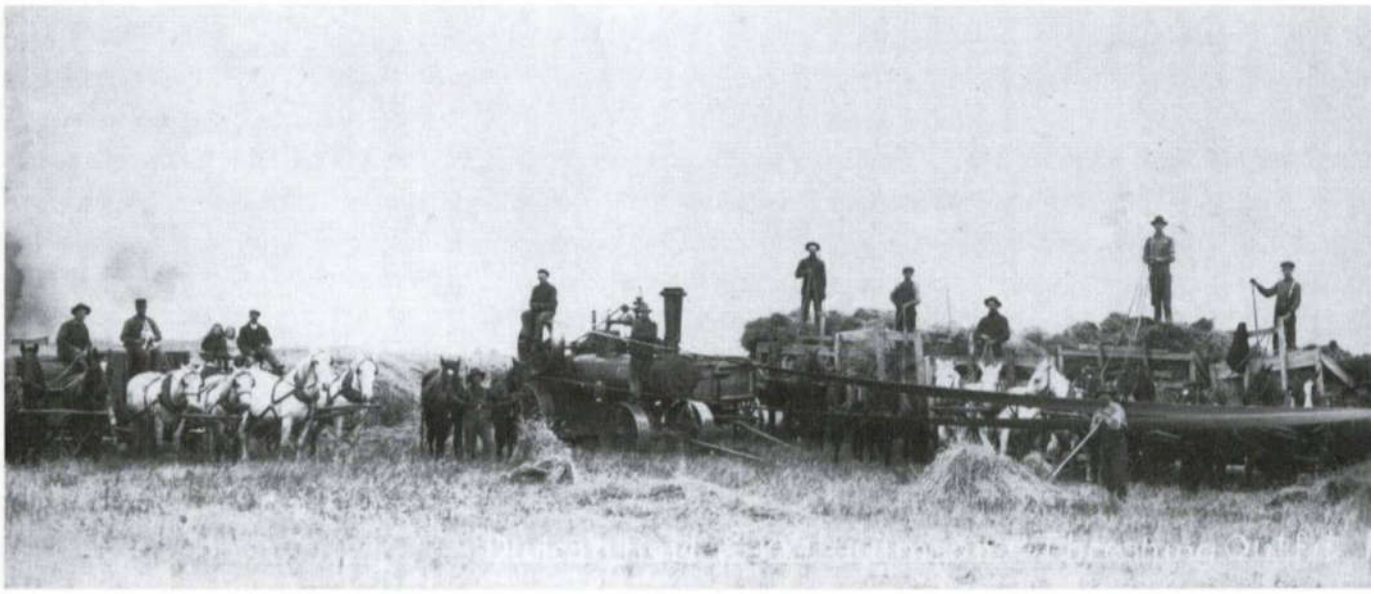
In conclusion, she makes this trenchant summation: "With the approach of the twenty-first century, it becomes even more critical that the relevance of the nineteenth-century museum exhibitions be re-considered. While it may prove that the role of the habitat diorama has more to do with the communicative functions of art than with the traditional didactics of science, this idea has not taken hold in the museum community. Few natural history museums acknowledge either the artistic or historic value of their exhibitions, a situation that jeopardizes the survival of many irreplaceable diorama displays. Moreover, museums in general tend to ignore their early debt to the collection and display of natural history specimens. Because of the initial lack of availability of cultural objects, regional, provincial, state, and private museums founded in countries with abundant natural resources, such as Canada, Sweden and the U.S.A., turned instead to nature as a substitute for human history. However, as these museums grew into more prestigious institutions of cultural history, they disposed of their natural history specimens so as not to reveal their humble origins. The Royal British Columbia Museum, to cite only one example, no longer has any of the groups of native mammals and birds in environmental settings which were once described as exceptional. In summary, there is still lacking a comprehensive and critical assessment of the habitat diorama that prevents it from gaining legitimacy from either of the two opposing camps between science and art which it strides."

It is my fervent hope that all who read Dr. Wonder's summation will respond to her appeal: preserve the past in order to understand the future. ◆

Winnipeg wildlife artist Clarence Tillenius created dioramas for museums across Canada.

Pictures from Canadian Attics

The two photographs below were submitted by Tom Onichuk of Fort Frances, Ontario, who rescued them from the town dump. Labels on the photos indicate they were taken by two different professional photographers in the early 1900s, and are of the Reid family who farmed near the village of Reston in south-western Manitoba. The family may have wished to have a visual record of their hard-won success in a new land; perhaps to send to distant relatives. Agencies such as the Government and CPR also took such photographs to impress prospective settlers in Europe.



DO YOU have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or fascinatingly ordinary, in the history of our country?

If you would like to submit it to *The Beaver* for possible publication in "Pictures from Canadian Attics", please include a brief description of the picture with its date and location, and identify people if possible. We will publish the best entries and provide a fee of $25.00 for every photo used.

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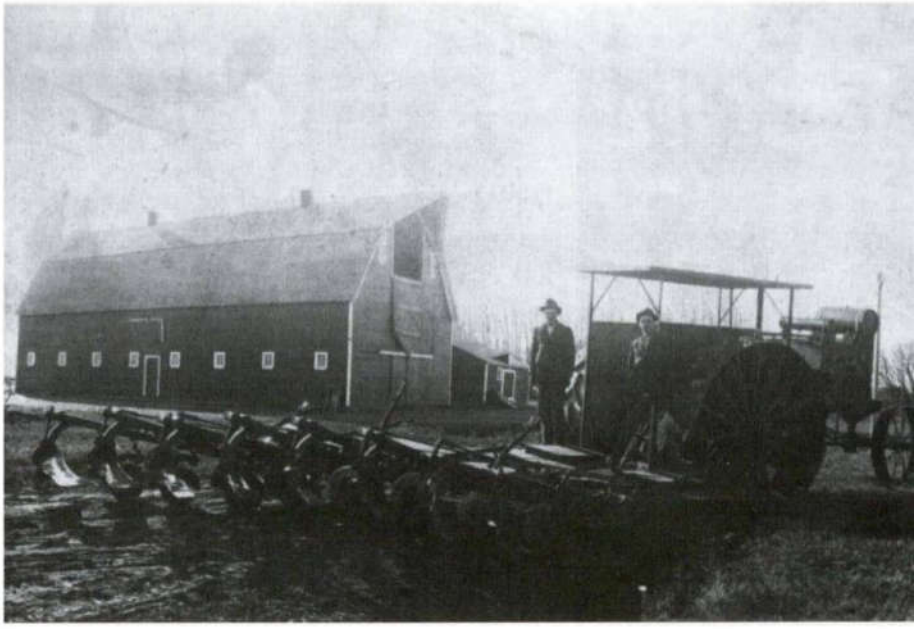
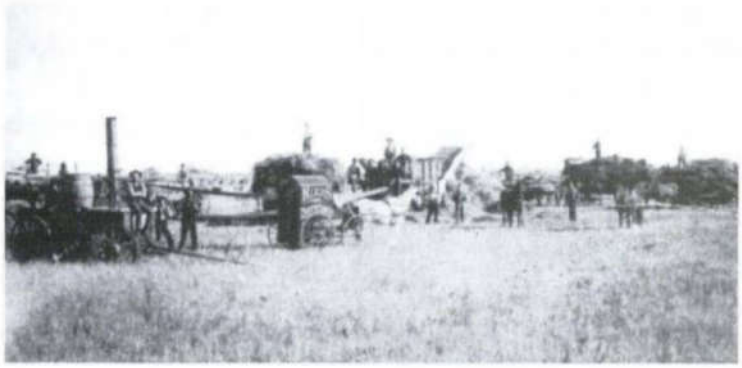
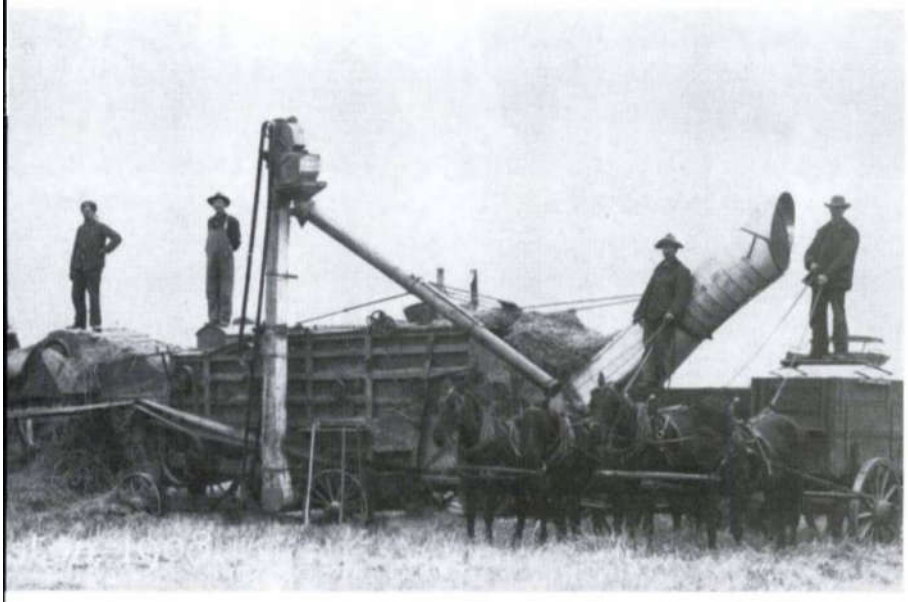




Travelling photographer Miers visits a threshing outfit near Boissevain, Manitoba, 1887.

Photo courtesy W.D. Henderson, Brandon.



Duncan Reid & Williamson's Threshing Outfit, Reston, 1908

(Steam engine weighing 10 tons or more at left; thresher or separator at right, attached to the engine by a series of continuous belts.) Steam-driven threshing machines first appeared on the Canadian prairies in the mid-1880s. The machinery was expensive and required knowledgeable operators, giving rise to the now-legendary custom-threshing outfits, which consisted of a small army of men and horses.

By the time of the First World War the majestic but cumbersome steam engines were being replaced by lighter, more efficient gasoline tractors, however the era of steam threshing was affectionately remembered by many Canadians as bringing a special excitement and fascination to harvest operations.

James Reid Farm, Reston, Manitoba, circa 1915

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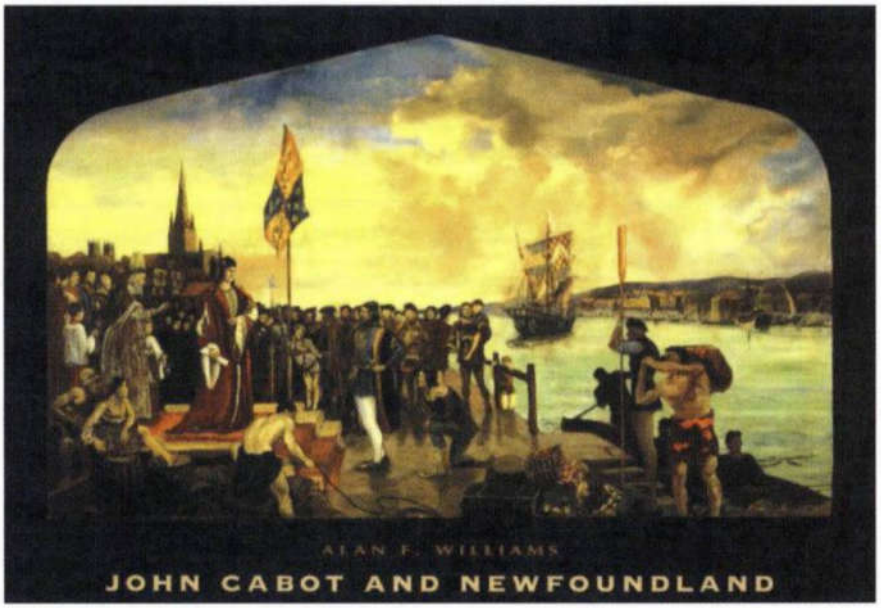


Written for a popular audience by Professor Alan Williams, this small, well-illustrated, handsome volume offers a concise overview of John Cabot and his famous voyage of 1497. It is Cabot in a nutshell in a user-friendly form. Copies at $12.45 each (includes GST, shipping and handling) are available from:

Newfoundland Historical Society, Room 15, Colonial Bldg., Military Road, St. John's NF A1C 2C9
Phone: 709-722-3191, Fax: 709-729-0578

Christopher Moore

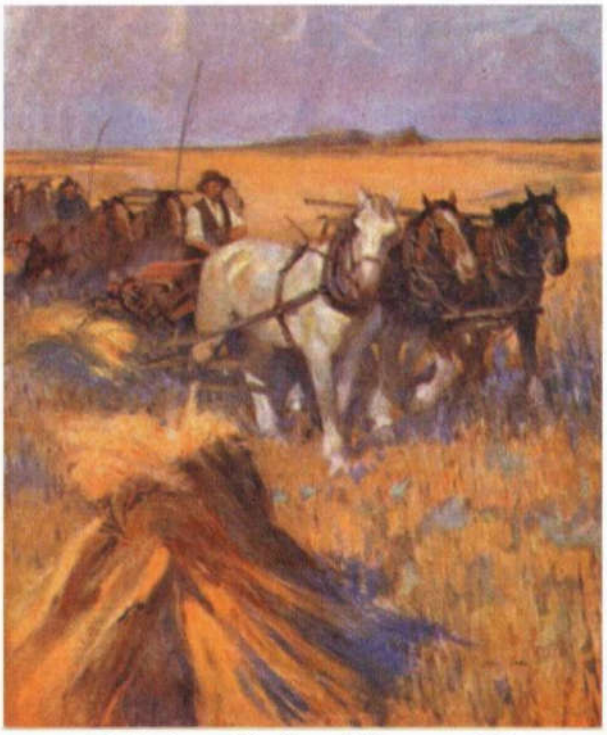
Out on the Great Lone Land

So many of the great nuclear physicists of this century have been Hungarians that another nuclear physicist once advanced the theory that Hungarians are actually aliens whose ancestors came long ago from space to colonize that corner of Europe. As evidence, he cited their language (unrelated to any other in Europe), their wanderlust (incurable), and their intelligence (unearthly).

Except for the part about language, Saskatchewan may be the Canadian Hungary. All those bright and dynamic people who have come out of Saskatchewan to do great things aren't exactly from outer space. They are, as the title of Dennis Gruending's recent and lovely book about his province puts it, from *The Middle of Nowhere*.

Provincial history seems to be a growth industry in publishing. Local history is perennially strong, and books about Nova Scotia and B.C. recently launched Viking Canada's series of provincial histories from non-historian writers. (*Bowering's B.C.*, by poet and novelist George Bowering, is reviewed in the previous *Beaver*). But Gruending and his publisher, Fifth House of Saskatoon, have chosen a different route. *The Middle of Nowhere: Rediscovering Saskatchewan* is an anthology of what has been written about Saskatchewan over the last 250 years. And the anthology form was an inspired choice.

In one of the pieces Gruending includes, editor and critic Caroline Heath describes how much the documentary impulse – "we need to tell our story" – has inspired prairie fiction. And Gruending has gone straight to the documentary source. All the pieces in the collection are non-fiction, and it is remarkable how much non-fiction Saskatchewan has inspired. The *Middle of Nowhere* offers access to classic titles that to many readers will be half-known but never read and are probably out of print. Gruending's choices roam from the journals of David Thompson and Butler's *The Great Lone Land* to excerpts from Wallace Stegner and Fredelle Bruser Maynard.



"Saskatchewan" by Cyrus C. Cuneo, ca. 1911

Assembling his selections, Gruending says, he was constantly surprised by the amount that has been written about his home province. "Working on this book, I just read all the time, everywhere I was. My daughters were taking ballet at the time, and I remember I would go to the library across from the gym, and they would join me after class. And it was just a pleasure to read all this material, and find how much there was, things I had never heard of."

Maynard's *Raisins and Almonds* is set in Birch Hills, "about 25 miles from my home in St. Benedict. I'd played hockey in her town. I just took it for granted. Suddenly to discover it from the perspective of the only Jewish girl in town, both part of the town and outside it, that was an entirely fresh perspective." In William Francis Butler's *The Great Lone Land*, which Gruending calls "a classic of travel literature," the quality of the prose alone was a revelation. And in Georgina Binnie-Clark's *Wheat and Woman*, he was surprised to find a proto-feminist's account of an age when women were denied access to the free land any male homesteader could claim.

Butler, a British army officer who visited the Northwest in 1870, before the settlers came, loved the country of the big river as a "lone" empty land. Gruending reminds him, however, that it had been inhabited for 10,000 years by then. The first quarter of his book attempts to recover some testimony from aboriginal Saskatchewan. "I was very glad to get some of the experience of aboriginal society. That 10,000 years' stretch of prehistory is mostly unwritten, but there are ways to recover some of it." One way is through the writing of Edward Ahenakew, who early this century wrote out in Cree syllabics the stories of the aged Cree leader Thunderchild. In Thunderchild's youth, his people had long been accustomed to rifles and to trading furs for tea and sugar, but his story of one harsh winter's starving is a vivid text in stone-age economics, when times of plenty were very fine and bad times hardly bore thinking about.

For Gruending, what lingers from his reading of David Thompson was "the intelligence and sympathy with which he wrote of native people. Gerald Friesen, in his history of the prairies (*The Canadian Prairies: A History*), writes of that time when there was a rather equal relationship between Europeans and native people, before the native economies were destroyed. That comes out strongly in Thompson: his acceptance of native autonomy and of native culture, and his respectful interest in it." For Gruending, it was a new insight. "I regret that the equality that shows through there didn't survive the destruction of the native economy. Once that was gone, native people didn't seem to be thought important anymore."

Gruending calls "The Promised Land," his group of selections from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, "central to our mythology." That brief, hectic moment included the end of the buffalo, the carving out of reserves, the Metis rising, and the founding of cities and provinces. Above all, it was about the moment when no prediction was too bright for the tidal wave of settlers who created the wheat economy and the remarkable ethnic diversity of Saskatchewan. One piece with special resonance for Gruending is the memoir by Father Bruno Doerfler, whose band of German Mennonites of 1902 brought Gruending's own grandparents in their wake. Doerfler neatly summarizes the settler's dream when he describes a group of Galicians (Ukrainians) and their three-year-old homesteads near Rosthern. "When they arrived, they had been poor as beggars, but now many of them were already well to do." Just as optimistic was greenhorn rancher R.D. Symons who happily described how the wet summer of 1906 made "the grass a green carpet from Moose Jaw Creek to the Milk River".

The green seasons did not last. Even more fundamental to the mythology of Saskatchewan are the dry years. *The Middle of Nowhere* wobbles a little here. To capture the horrors of the dustbowl, there's just a brief excerpt from James Gray and nothing from Barry Broadfoot's magnificent oral histories. In exchange, Gruending offers Grey Owl and Gordie Howe and stories of bootlegging and the Regina Riot of 1935. He also gives us Art Karras. Instead of riding the rods east or west when the grass in Yellow Grass dried up in 1932, the resourceful Karras went north, to survive as a trapper and to write a fine book about the experience. Gruending knew of Karras's memoir *North to Cree Lake* but nothing about its author, who seemed to have dropped off the literary map until Gruending encountered him, now a retired college

"ENCOUNTERS WITH HISTORY" 1996 FINALIST

THE CHIEF IN VICTORY

Ian Bickle
(Bickle, Saskatchewan)

On election night in 1958, I was on duty in the main studio of Saskatoon's CFQC-TV when John Diefenbaker arrived from Prince Albert to broadcast to the nation, aware that he had an overwhelming victory. Before going on the air, he toured the studio, accompanied by constituency associates and station management to check the Saskatchewan results. I moved close to the group just as it stopped to check the figures for Rosetown-Biggar where prominent CCFer M.J. Coldwell was defeated by C.O. Cooper of the PCs.

Mr. Diefenbaker slowly shook his head; there was no sign of an exuberance displayed earlier in the tour. "That's really too bad," he said softly. "A fine man. Very capable." He remained still for a few seconds, then moved on.

Later in 1958 Mr. Coldwell was named chairman of a UN commission to evaluate community development in India, an appointment made possible by John Diefenbaker's endorsement.

administrator mowing his lawn in Nipawin, evidently as adaptable as ever.

The hard times helped inspire Saskatchewan's unique political culture, rooted in a faith in collective action as the best antidote to disaster. Tommy Douglas's legacy dominates this section. It takes its title from his promise to build "the new Jerusalem" in Saskatchewan, but the absence of a strong piece on Douglas himself points up the curious absence of a really substantial study of him. Gruending offers tales ranging from the epic doctors' strike of 1962 through Emmett Hall on the holy Crow Rate to Maggie Siggins on the Colin Thatcher murder trial.

This material comes from Dennis Gruending's own turf. Raised on a farm where his parents "grew poorer every year" on two quarter-sections, Gruending went to St Peter's College, worked as a journalist for several Saskatchewan newspapers, and wrote biographies of Emmett Hall and Premier Allan Blakeney (both excerpted here). In the late 1980s he was heard all over Saskatchewan as host of CBC Radio's "Morning Edition". ("It was a wonderful job. People take their politics seriously here, so we could do a lot more than fluff and Wall Street stock reports.") He moved to Ottawa after that, and *The Middle of Nowhere* was assembled there.

With an exile's sharpened perspective, perhaps, Gruending puts a question mark after "the new Jerusalem". He's not certain about the future of Saskatchewan's hardpressed rural society – or of the distinct political culture in which he was raised. "Will it remain vibrant? Or will the focus on globalization, on international market forces, be too great for local political initiative to survive?"

"That's not just a Saskatchewan question, of course," Gruending says, but recently he decided to join the battle back in Saskatchewan. He has been nominated as NDP candidate in the federal riding of Saskatoon-Humboldt, which includes not only his old home but also such sites of Saskatchewan history as Batoche. These days political rallies rather than library research have become his vehicle for "rediscovering Saskatchewan", (his book's subtitle).

It seems only a cliché to say a book about the prairies is a book about the land. As he made his anthology, Gruending actually steered away from "landscape writing". He looked, he says, for active voice over reflective or descriptive pieces. He (and his publisher, who knows its prairie audience well and has developed a substantial list in local history) wanted an anthology of people doing things, and they wanted the pieces to be short, both for diversity and to encourage browsing by those who might not read the whole book.

These choices doubtless helped make Gruending's anthology the enticing book it is. (I had never heard of it when I snapped it up on impulse in a Toronto bookstore.) But most good books about Canada have a sense of place, and this is no exception, from Butler's deftly-sustained metaphor of the "ocean of grass" to Sharon Butala's powerful statement in the closing pages: "It is unbelievable to me that futurists and experts at universities and in government don't see how important it is to all of us that a stable body of people remain in intimate touch with the land."

Gruending observes that in Saskatchewan local histories "the past was a much more comfortable place than the present. The future rarely intrudes." He notes how often people ask him to autograph copies they are sending off to a son or daughter "in Vancouver or wherever." But evidently Saskatchewan would still be somewhere even if no one remained there, for something of Saskatchewan goes with them. Gruending opens his book with an epigraph (from Edward McCourt) about the Saskatchewan man who "shakes the dust of the province from his person ... and still finds himself, more often than not, still bound in spirit" to the land. Even for someone who has never spent more than a couple of days there, *The Middle of Nowhere* makes that seem obvious.

***The Middle of Nowhere*, edited by Dennis Gruending, was published by Fifth House Publishers, Saskatoon & Calgary, in 1996.**

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THE SOCIETY

Berton Award to Lacoursière

The McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal provided an unique ambience for a dinner, 9 November, 1996, to honour Jacques Lacoursière, the recipient of the 1996 Pierre Berton Award for popularizing Canadian history. The dinner took place on the eve of the Society's November Board meeting, the first one to be held in Montreal.

Mr. Lacoursière is the most renowned and prolific popular historian writing in the French language in Canada. For more than thirty years, he has made the history of Québec and Canada more accessible and visible by using a variety of media: books, newspapers, magazines, exhibitions, films and radio and television broadcasts. An interview with Mr. Lacoursière appeared in the December 1996/January 1997 edition of *The Beaver*.

The Pierre Berton Award is presented to a Canadian for distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. It consists of a cash prize of $5000, a medal and a life membership in the Society. The Award was established in 1994 with Pierre Berton as the first recipient. He graciously agreed to having the award named after him in subsequent years. James H. Gray, of Calgary, received the award in 1995.

Nominations for the 1997 competition close on 30 May. See the Pierre Berton Award advertisement in this issue for more information.

Be Our Guests

The Society has introduced a pilot project with the Association of Canadian Clubs.

Under the plan, the Society sponsors the attendance of high school history students at Canadian Club lunch or dinner meetings that feature a history speaker. The Society covers the cost of the students' meals to a maximum of $500 per meeting.

Rolph Huband, right, president of the Society, presents the Pierre Berton Award to Jacques Lacoursière, in the company of Paul-André Linteau, a Society Director.

To date, the Society has sponsored students in Oakville, Pembroke, North Bay, London, Lindsay and Oshawa, Ontario; Winnipeg; Edmonton and Calgary; Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, Penticton, Kelowna, Kamloops, Revelstoke and Vernon, B.C. The speakers in question were either authors Pierre Berton and Marsha Boulton, who were a part of the national program arranged by the Association in Ottawa, or Manitoba historian Gerald Friesen, of the University of Manitoba, who addressed the Winnipeg Canadian Club in March.

Student attendance averaged 25 at each meeting.

You are invited to visit the Society's Web Site at http://www.cyberspc.mb.ca/~otmw/cnhs/cnhs.html

Website a Winner

The Society has received an Editor's Choice Award for its website from LookSmart, a subsidiary of *Reader's Digest*.

The award recognizes the highest standard for providing a useful and high-quality website and entitles the Society to display the Editor's Choice symbol of excellence.

LookSmart is a a web directory. Unlike other directories that simply index the web and include any site that asks, it has standards that must be met for inclusion, not unlike the editorial standards developed and refined by its parent company over the last 75 years. LookSmart considered well over a million websites before selecting a short list of about 110,000 that met its criteria.

Joe Ghiz

With the death of The Honourable Justice Joseph A. Ghiz on 9 November, 1996, the Society lost a highly respected director and Canada lost a great citizen.

The former premier of Prince Edward Island was nationally known for his strong defence of and passion for a united Canada, and the eloquence he gave to that message in public and private forums. He brought identical qualities to the Society, and its board meetings, where his warmth, wit, intellect and counsel were welcomed, appreciated and now deeply missed. He died at age 51.

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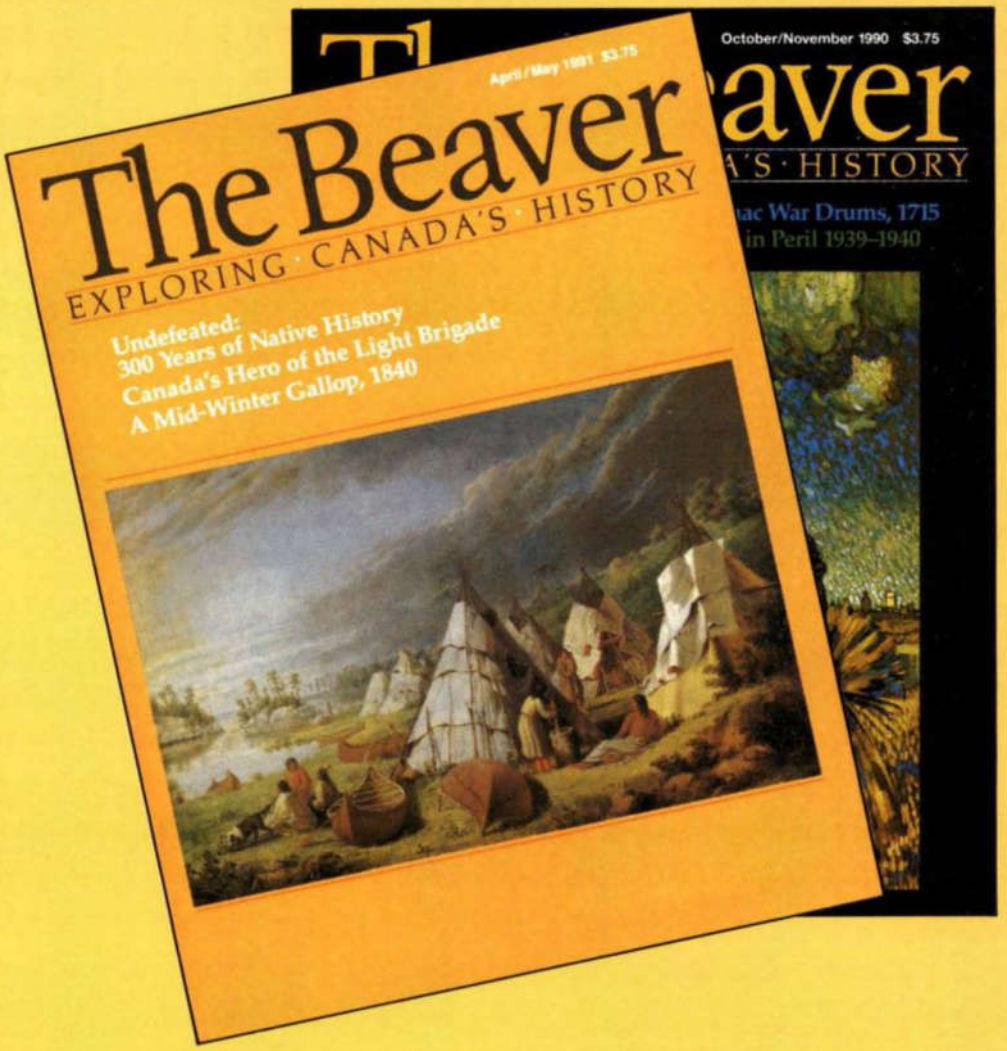

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